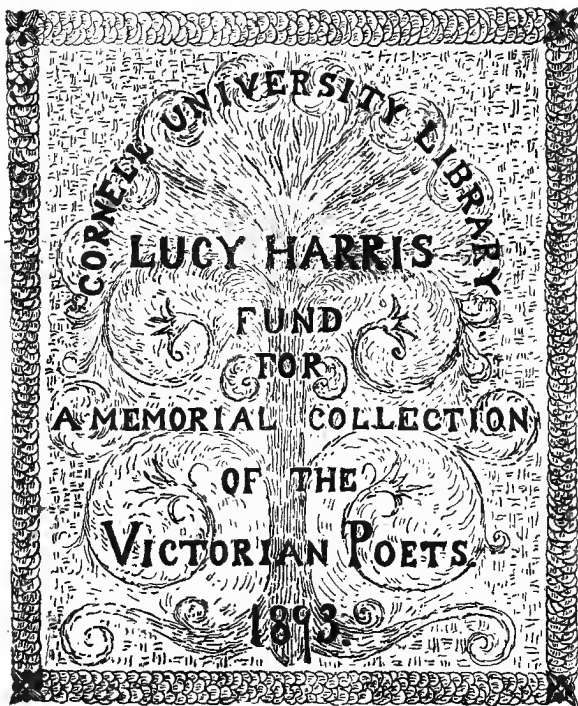






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BIBLE TRAGEDIES.

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JOHN THE BAPTIST;
OR
THE VALOUR OF THE SOUL.

RAHMAN.
The Apocryphal Book of Job's Wife.

JUDAS ISCARIOT.
A MYSTERY.

BY RICHARD HENGIST HORNE.
=

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LONDON:
NEWMAN AND CO.,
43, HART STREET, BLOOMSBURY, W.C.

A.184568

JOHN THE BAPTIST.

JOHN THE BAPTIST;

OR,

THE VALOUR OF THE SOUL.

In Two Acts.

NOTE.

"THE early Christian Apologists anathematised the Greek mysteries, but no sooner did Christianity become the faith of the civilised world than—as MR. MACCOLL has pointed out—attempts were made to vivify the faith of the early converts, and enlist new proselytes by means of dramatic representations. Hence sprung up the Mystery and Miracle Plays, and the 'Moralities,' which for ages nurtured the piety and instructed the minds of the rude people to whom books could not speak, and in whose ears the sermons of the Churchmen were but the windy ethics of the Schools. WYCKLIFFE and his followers launched fulminations against them. But MARTIN LUTHER, whose robust mind saw in them an effective aid to his propaganda, gave them his sanction, on the ground that 'such spectacles often do more good and produce more impression than sermons.' Hence, throughout Sweden and Denmark they were long popular; and even up to the close of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries, when ELIZABETH, JAMES I., and CHARLES I. often witnessed them, they flourished in England. To this day their influence may be seen in the Cornish acting of 'St. George and the Dragon' and 'Beelzebub.'"

Standard, (on the "Ober-Ammergau Play,") *April* 15th, 1880.

"Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist."

Matthew xi. 11.

JOHN THE BAPTIST;

OR,

The Valour of the Soul,



ACT I.

SCENE I.

The Clouds of Heaven. Angels descend upon the earth on a broad green plain of Judæa. Time night.

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

A new Star of the Night is born—

The Night of human grief and gloom—

A Star to shine

With beams divine

Upon man's cradle, course, and tomb.

SEMI-CHORUS THE FIRST.

He shall baptize with dews of Morn,
And streams from rocks and flowering meads ;
And fill the land with golden corn
Where grew gigantic thorns and weeds !

A VOICE.

When old Idolatries become man's scorn,
With Vengeful Wrath of early creeds !

SEMI-CHORUS THE SECOND.

But soon shall rise another Star,
Half-brother of the same rare growth—
Each, Leader of the Soul's first war—
THE HOLY GHOST BEGAT THEM BOTH.*

A VOICE.

The Peace and Love
For which they strove,
Mankind shall find in ages far.

CHORUS.

Now sing of John,
The earliest one,

* Luke i. 13, 15, 18, 19, 24, 25, 26, 41.

Wakening the earth
To a new birth,
For many a hard fight, lost and won !
Though his bleeding head
For a girl's dance paid ;—
Sing we a high triumphal song
To the Valiant Soul as pure as strong !
The bearer of the mighty rod !
THE FIRST-BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD !*

SCENE II.

The Wilderness, between Bethany and Jericho.

A VOICE (*crying in the Wilderness*).

“ Prepare ye the way of the LORD !

Make His paths straight !

Every valley shall be filled,

And every mountain and hill

Shall be brought low ;

* Luke i. 13, 15, 18, 19, 24, 25, 26, 41.

And the crooked made straight,
And the rough ways smooth ;
And all flesh shall see
The salvation of God !”

Enter JOHN, clothed in ragged skins.

JOHN.

The dry dust, bare boughs, and the fruitless thorn—
The scorching sun, sharp rains and howling winds—
Companion this my body ; as the wolf,
The stork, the pelican, the lonely owl,
And silent fox, are cherished savagely.
From the same pool or gushing rock we drink,
But differing in our food ; they eat whate’er
Of life they can subdue—oft-times each other—
While I in bitter roots find nourishment,
And berries, sweet or bitter. But my soul
Hath other nutriment in noblest dreams,
Visions, and hopes, and inward prophecies,
For I walk here companion’d by my God !

(JOHN seateth himself upon a ledge of rock.)

My father, Zacharias, said of me—
“Thou child—the child of my old age, and hers,
Thy mother, yea my wife Elizabeth—

To whom the Angel Gabriel was sent
To make her know and instantly believe
The Holy Ghost would fructify her womb,
And also glorify her coming child ;
Thou," said my father, " art that holy son.
Thou shalt be fillèd with the Holy Ghost !
Thou shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest ;
For thou shalt go before the face of God,
His ways preparing ! Knowledge shalt thou give
Unto His people of their sure salvation,
By sins remitted through God's tender mercy,
Whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited
Us in our tears and yearnings—to give light
To them that sit in darkness and the shadow
Of Death, and guide to ways of peace our feet."^{*}
Thus spake my aged father unto me,
Yea, thus spake Zacharias. I am ready.

(JOHN *riseth, and taketh his staff.*)

The day is come—
After severe probation and seclusion
Of my whole life—when I to Israel
Must show myself—the herald of these things !

[*Exit.*

^{*} Luke i. 76, etc.

SCENE III.

Portico of the Palace of HEROD, Tetrarch of Galilee. HEROD and his queen, HERODIAS—(richly and immodestly attired)—are now seated at chess.

HERODIAS.

And in three moves I win !

HEROD.

If I play ill.

HERODIAS.

Play how thou mayest, Lord Tetrarch, I must win.

HEROD.

I do not see it.

HERODIAS.

Therefore art thou lost.

(The Queen moves.)

HEROD.

Not so ! (HERODIAS *laugheth.*) Not yet !

Ho, slaves ! bring wine !

(*Voice of JOHN THE BAPTIST without.*)

“Bring judgment !”

Enter JOHN.

HERODIAS.

This is the wild man from the wilderness !

HEROD.

I have heard much of thee. There have been men
Who in thy savage haunts have thronged to hear
Thy raving prophecies ; but get thee hence,
And to thy woods return.

HERODIAS.

While yet you may.

HEROD.

Why comest thou here ?

JOHN.

To warn thee of the doom,
That, like a beetling cliff, hangs o'er thy head !

HEROD.

What doom ? And wherefore ?

HERODIAS.

Give the wolf some meat ;
For this he comes ; or have him beaten hence.

JOHN.

One of the Tetrad art thou.

HEROD.

Hence a King.

JOHN.

Of Galilee : thy brother Philip also—
Tetrarch of——

HERODIAS (*half rising*).

Let him speak no more !

JOHN.

I will

Speak more. Thy brother Philip's wife——

HERODIAS.

Away!

JOHN.

Sits at thy side—thy sister and thy wife!—

Herodias, thy stone-eyed concubine,

Who now would look me dead! But I am sent

Thee to admonish of thy sinful life—

Thy ruthlessness to the poor—thy lack of justice—

Thy many evil deeds!

HEROD.

Thou sent!—Who sent thee?

JOHN (*pointing upwards*).

The Most High! He, to whom Tiberius Cæsar

Is but a nodding tree-top, and his armies

The motley autumn leaves which fall around!

[*Exit* JOHN.]

HERODIAS.

Thou heard'st !—he did blaspheme Tiberius Cæsar !
Bid thy guards follow him !—pluck out his heart—
Or slay him with the back ridge of their swords,
So shall he have more time to call his God !

HEROD.

Thy passion prompts, and reasonably prompts
In thee ; but I were best restrain my hand,
For many people gather tow'rds this man,
Calling him "holy," one possessed of gifts
From preternatural sources. This may be.

HERODIAS (*darkly*).

So. To our game !

HEROD (*pointing to the chess-board*).

Let all stand still awhile !

(*Aside.*)

A Prophet risen from the dead, some say ;
While others think he never died at all,
But was borne upward in a fiery chariot !
I'm very ill at ease touching that man.

[*Exit HEROD, followed by guards, slaves, etc.*

HERODIAS (*rising slowly*).

The beast-clad savage called me "concubine!"
"Stoney-eyed wife and sister!"—he shall find
Such stones have secret fires, and secret sight.
Go thy ways, "Prophet of the Wilderness!"
I will watch over thee with sleepless eyes!

End of Act I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

The Valley of the Jordan.

CHORUS OF PEOPLE.

Behold, he comes!—he whose voice cried
For years within the Wilderness,
Unquelled by hunger, cold, distress!—
Prepare God's way, both straight and wide!
Each valley He shall fill—
Each mount and hill
Shall be brought low;
The crooked shall be straight in growth;
Rough ridge and row
Shall be made smooth;
And all flesh shall salvation see
In God's Paternity.

Enter JOHN.

JOHN.

I do baptize men only for repentance,
Whence comes remission for your previous sins.
O, viperous generation ! a Voice hath warn'd you
To flee from wickedness, which dragon-like
Pursues to rend you ? Bring forth, therefore, fruits
Worthy of true repentance, nor fall back
On Abraham and the mist-clad patriarch times—
Whose sacred clouds and thunders none may scan—
For God is able of these stones to raise
Fresh children unto Abraham. Now, behold
The axe is laid unto the root ; each tree
That bringeth not good fruit shall be cut down
And cast into the fire.*

CHORUS OF PEOPLE.

What shall we do ?

JOHN.

He that two garments hath, let him give one
To those who need : he that hath food, do likewise.

* Luke iii. 7, 8, 9, etc.

CHORUS OF PUBLICANS.

We, also, at thy hand
Would be baptized with holy dew,
In this our hopeful land :
Master ! what should we do ?

JOHN.

Exact no more than justice doth appoint.

CHORUS OF SOLDIERS.

Master ! what shall we do ?

JOHN.

Do violence to no man !—cease your trade
In bloody fields : seek ye the loom or plough :
Be false to none : content ye with your wage.

FULL CHORUS.

Who art thou ?—say !
For we expect thy promised day,
When to all barren fields and sorrowing homes
Messiah comes !
And art thou he ?

JOHN.

With water I baptize ; a mightier one—
Albeit my brother, younger by six months*—
Cometh, the dusty latchet of whose shoes
I am not worthy to unloose ; and He,
With fire of life, and with the Holy Ghost,
Shall baptize all who are His chosen grain—
Casting the chaff away, to burn till lost
In ashes and the highway's common dust.

SCENE II.

*The River Jordan. A Grove on one side ;
a Roman Temple on the other.*

Enter HERODIAS from the Temple.

HERODIAS.

I have besought the Gods of Rome

* Luke i. 36.

For aid and vengeance,—and a sign
That every towering Form of stone
Approved of my design.
No smile—and no oracular word—
But from the walls there fell a sword !
The omen was divine.

(VOICES *from the Grove*—HERODIAS *retires within the Temple.*)

*Enter JOHN from the Grove, followed
by his DISCIPLES.*

JOHN.

Do honestly ; love God, but fear no man.
Herod, with all his guards, is of less weight
Than one true soul. Fear God, but love Him more ;
For he whose love is only through his fear,
Owns a low piety, worse than a dog
Who hath no higher knowledge. Come, my brothers !

Enter many People to be Baptized.

(JOHN *now steps into the waters. Many come to him, in succession.*)

CHORUS OF DISCIPLES.

Destroying Wrath of ancient days—
The terrible God of Moses—
Is changing to a pitying love,
Surrounded by divine soft rays ;
While from dark clouds we now can see,
Descending slow, a sun-lit dove
Whose breast hath tints of roses,
That glance and sparkle tremulously !

JOHN (*baptizing*).

Pass on your way, my brothers !—
Fix not your hopes for ever on this world,
But on a higher Kingdom, which is Heaven !*—
Go on your way rejoicing in the Lord :—
Who is a pitying Father to us all :—
Do unto others as you would that they
Should do unto you :†—in the wilderness
Aid those who are lost, and in a shipwreck those
Who sink where ye can swim ;—but who *now* cometh ?
This young man whose divine humility
Maketh my rough knees tremble ! “ One,” he saith,

* The Talmud.

† Idem.

“From Nazareth.” I know who he must be,—
Though since our childhood we have never met.
Behold, a white bird softly now descendeth,
And hovereth over him ! This—this is he,
My younger brother, grown to man’s estate
Since we were parted in our infant years,
Whom I have seen in visions !—this is he
Whose winnowing-fan shall separate the chaff
From the sound corn ; shall make the poor rejoice,
The rich ones sorrow ; give his pure heart’s blood
For sinful men, and teach the trampled people—
Earth’s slavish lap-dogs for successive kings—

(HERODIAS *appears in the porch of the Temple,
and retires.*)

The worshippers of gew-gaws in a row—
Of necklaces, crowns, bracelets that excite
Mad follies—seeing not reality—
Of chains and charms, all framed and forged in Hell—
Shall teach, I say unto ye, that the shade
That followeth on one godly ploughman’s heel,
Homeward returning from his honest work,

Is nobler than the shining devilishness
Of all the Cæsars and their Tetrarch mimes !

*Roman Guards issue from the Temple, and seize
JOHN, who is borne away to prison.
Several of his DISCIPLES, striving to rescue JOHN,
are slain.*

SCENE III.

*Bed-chamber of SALOME—daughter of HERODIAS
by PHILIP, Tetrarch of Ituræa, and brother of
HEROD.*

(HERODIAS caressing SALOME.)

HERODIAS.

Thou hast a Mænad shape, and in the dance
'Twill best be seen.

SALOME.

But not as for the bath !

HERODIAS.

No ; for these garments I will substitute
This rich transparent veil, and wide-mesh'd nets
Enwrought with gold threads and keen-flashing gems.
Come—fold thee—thus—or thus ?

SALOME.

I fear this dress
Will discompose all modesty.

HERODIAS.

Think only
Of that wherein thou dost surpass all others.

SALOME.

The dance ?

HERODIAS.

Thou hast, besides, a dazzling beauty—
Stinging, withal !

SALOME.

I hope thou dost but jest ?

I would not sting.

HERODIAS.

Thou dost not understand.

The music and the lamps will I arrange,
So to diffuse rare fancies through the brain
Where wine and incense, subtilly devised,
Hath bred voluptuous delirium.

SALOME.

But nought of this——

HERODIAS.

How say'st thou ?

SALOME.

Shall I feel.

HERODIAS.

The better will thine innocence and art
Make others feel it. Be not led astray
By scruples, thoughts, hopes, fears, or vanities—
Though, for the last, thy secret tinglys
Were not mistimed ; but give free scope to grace ;

Cast back thy beaming hair—thine arms on high
Wave, and fling back, and bend thy serpent shape
On all sides, thus—t' the music. I shall call thee
“Dipsas!”

SALOME.

A burning serpent!—do not so!

HERODIAS (*laughing*).

Or “Seminuda!”—vestal of the Sun!

SALOME.

I do not like these names.

HERODIAS.

Well, 'tis no matter.

Lord Herod's birthday must we celebrate,
As each best can.

SALOME.

But, mother, hast thou not
Some further purpose in this dance? Thy face
Is wrought with changeful lines and lights?

HERODIAS.

I have—

But no design that's clear. 'Twere vain romance,
Save that the hot breath and the whispering
Of a red-crested basilisk charms mine ear
With something that may chance—causing great joy
and fear !

End of Act II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Festal Hall in the Palace of King Herod.

HEROD, HERODIAS, *Lords, Ladies, High Captains,
and Chief Estates of Galilee seated at supper.
Roman Music.*

HERODIAS.

Fill the King's cup again !

HEROD.

'Tis not yet empty ! (*The King laughs.*)

Thy joy is like a new and prodigal summer
That giveth not due time from flower to fruit,
But forceth consummation.

HERODIAS.

Then, fill all—

To the King's birthday !

HEROD.

Nay, 'twas drank before !

HERODIAS.

His future birthdays !

HEROD.

(*Laughing*) Still, in life's advance !

[*All drink to the King. Trumpets. HERODIAS
brims HEROD'S goblet. Music of the psaltery,
sackbut, harps, and cymbals.*]

HERODIAS.

Listen !—'tis for a wondrous dancing-girl !

HEROD.

I guess her name—I have heard much of her,
As matchless in the dance. It is thy daughter.

HERODIAS.

'Tis *Seminuda* !—vestal of the sun !

HEROD (*with delight*).

Let Phœbus part with her a little while !

Where is she?—wherefore comes she not? Send for her !

HERODIAS (*rising hastily*).

I—I will go for her ! (*aside*) 'Twere best she came
Without me, and my promptings be not seen.

[*Exit* HERODIAS.]

HEROD.

My birthday should be rich as autumn's lap
With flowers and fruit. Bring more—bring heaps—
And bring, besides, the wine of my first youth !

*Slaves bring in additional vases with flowers ;
golden chargers heaped up with fruits ; and urns
of incense. Dance-music as before.*

*The KING falls into a delirium, as the colours of the
incense are varied with the movements of the
dance-music.*

HEROD.

I see a dazzling platform in the sun,
Whereon a virgin of the temple dances !
Ha ! 'tis a vision !—wherefore comes she not ?
My blood's on fire ! where is reality ?

SCENE II.

*Bed-chamber of SALOME, in a wing of the Palace,
as before. HERODIAS, undressing SALOME.*

HERODIAS (*wildly*).

Now ! now ! my shrinking girl !

SALOME.

What would you do ?

HERODIAS.

Make you a true Terpsichore !

SALOME.

But not

Like Greek or Roman statuary ?

HERODIAS.

No—no !

Leave all to me. I understand the King.

SALOME.

But I am now quite naked !

HERODIAS.

Take this veil !

This flying cloud ! Hold out your wrists !—these
bracelets !

The jewelled anklets now ! That's well. Now fold thee
I' the lustrous serpent volumes of this scarf.

The King is mad for thee!—begone ! and dance !

(Thrusts SALOME out.)

HERODIAS *(gasping for breath)*.

Stoney-eyed wife and sister, how is it with thee ?

And 'concubine,' he called me ! Very soon

Herod will shower rich gifts—he will grant anything
To the enchantress.

(Dance music heard from the hall.)

Ha ! the harp and flute !

Sackbut and cymbals !—now the tambourine

Beats at the heart and spins around the brain !

Now I behold my glorious naked one !

Yet not all naked—I'm too wise for that—

How the witch dances ! Ha ! ha ! Seminuda !

She was well named, I know ; for madness breeds

On expectation—pants for the next moment !
That's well ! I love the changes of the dance !
Oh, it is wondrous beautiful, my girl !
My grace—my limbs—my glancing mysteries—
My jewelled anklets—rich breasts—showers of hair !
Oh, I will kiss my beautiful one all over,
And with fond bites of transport cover her !

SCENE III.

*The Festal Hall, as before. SALOME dancing, with
a tambourine in one hand, and amidst clouds of
incense of changeful colours.*

HEROD (*in a wild rapture*).

The priestess of Sol's Temple now hath sent
A goddess clad in nought but odorous clouds
To madden each delight ! No more ! no more !
Yet cease not—cease not—my brain whirls !—no
more !

Her flying locks were golden ! now they change
To gilded black, shot with a lightning blue !

Now, all of silver !—tossing flames ! and now—
Her limbs are roseate, and a sparkling dew
Besprays her symmetry, as from the sea
Her feet came plashing thro' the bright-edged foam !
I say, no more ! Oh, I do swear to give thee
Whatever thou shalt ask, thou wondrous sprite !
Yea, to my kingdom's half—hear it, ye Gods !
Ye great Lords, Captains all—all hear the King !

[SALOME *retires amidst clouds of incense, and the
clash of cymbals.*]

FIRST LORD.

She could not answer—'tis too high a gift.
(*Aside*) What emeralds !—pearls !

SECOND LORD.

(*Aside*) The King hath lost his wits !

HEROD.

Now breathe soft Lydian flutes with sweet accord
Of voice and dulcimer ! I'll drink no more,
But let the fumes of wine give music shapes.
And visions of such forms as now we saw
Multiplied, passion-varied, intervolvent limbs !

SCENE IV.

Marble bath-room, in the Palace. Enter SALOME half-fainting.

SALOME.

Why was the King so wrought upon? what spell
Can a girl's dance enkindle, thus to madden
Into such promises? [*She walks up to a mirror, and
prepares for the bath.*]

And swear—methought—
Unto the half of's kingdom, he would give me
Herod did swear! What shall I ask of him?

Enter HERODIAS, (with a triumphant air).

HERODIAS.

Witch! larks-heel! now will I kiss thy feet, thou
wonder!

SALOME.

Have I done so very well?

HERODIAS.

Oh, matchless well!

SALOME.

You heard King Herod's promise ?

HERODIAS.

Yes—yes—yes !

SALOME.

What shall I ask ?

HERODIAS (*fiercely*).

The head of John the Baptist !

SALOME (*in dismay*).

The head of—Oh, my mother ! What, the head
Of John !—

HERODIAS.

I say his head—brought in a charger !

SALOME (*shuddering*).

But what to do—with that fast-bleeding gift ?

HERODIAS.

To roll before the dogs of Galilee !
Or toss into the Jordan—for self-baptism !

SALOME.

Oh mother !—Oh, I cannot !

HERODIAS (*with passion*).

But you must !

We are not safe while that head holds its place.
Think of the insults, barb'd—and poison'd too ;
Think of his daring threats against King Herod—
My husband—thy step-father—of the danger
To his rule here in Galilee—his life—
My life—nay, all our lives ;—and think besides,
Of this great moment for a perfect vengeance,
Which ne'er may fall again ! My will is fix'd.
Ask nothing else, but that forthright they bring thee
The head of John the Baptist in a charger !

SALOME (*in dismay*).

How—how shall I find words for this ? My mouth
Will open without speech !

HERODIAS (*furiously*).

Look in my face !

And gather words, like lightning on the wall
Whereon a dazzling scrawl writes—' half a kingdom !'

SALOME.

But this is of Death's kingdom!

HERODIAS.

And life's safety

For all of us. Jewels in heaps—but first
That mortal ruby!

SALOME (*starting*).

Oh, you strip all off!

I am again unclothed!

HERODIAS.

No, no, this veil!

Fold thee within its lustrous serpent-volumes!
And now return!—begone, I say!—and ask!

[*Exit SALOME*].

HERODIAS (*gasping for breath*).

I, too, lose speech! O, burning tears of joy!
Speak for me, scalding fountains of the grove
Where Vengeance stalks in hopes to meet the ghost
Of him she hath destroyed.

[*Voices from the hall*]

Ha! she has asked!

[*Storm without. Hurricane, followed by heavy hail and rain.*]

Enter HEROD (in great trouble).

HEROD.

What hath thy daughter asked ? why hast thou
caused her

To crave this thing ? I do repent mine oath.

The fumes of wine are driven o'er towers and fields
By sudden gusts of thought. Curs'd be that dance !
Jephtha was wrong in keeping his rash vow :

'Twere good he had considered which was worse—
To keep it, or to break it ;—and 'twas worse
To keep it. Many do believe and follow

This Prophet John. I have observ'd him well—
As a just man, and holy—and have heard
Much of his teaching, and have thought it good—
Heeding, in some sort, his reproof of us :—

Albeit, I would not have that known. Thy mænad
Should ask for something else.

HERODIAS (*rising solemnly*).

She shall do so.

HEROD.

What would she have ?

HERODIAS.

I care not—but I know
Thou wilt repent the change.

HEROD.

What should I fear ?

HERODIAS.

The Gods, by whom you swore.

HEROD.

I will consult the priests.

HERODIAS.

And fear besides
Great Cæsar's anger. Heard not thine own guards
What this man said of all the race of Cæsars !—
Of all the Cæsars, and their tetrarch apes—
Those were his words. Bethink thee of thy crown—
Not half thy kingdom, but the whole of it !—
Thy life—and of thy royal oath before
Those who sat with thee at thy birthday feast,
Who should not deem thy sceptre and thyself
A trembling shadow and a mockery !

HEROD.

All this is true.

HERODIAS.

Come back with me to the Hall.

{*Aside*) The King turns pale : Check—check—and I
[shall win.

HEROD.

I am exceeding sorry for mine oath.*

HERODIAS (*dolefully*).

And I—and I ;—but the Gods heard you swear !

And all the lords and captains of the court !

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

Dungeon in the Castle of Machærus (west of the Dead Sea), with iron grating for window. JOHN seated on a stone slab.

JOHN.

Nights creep on nights, and here they hold my life
Pending the pleasure of the wicked queen*—

* Mark vi. 17, &c.

The incestuous spouse of Herod ! Yet do I hear,
Through these black walls, of gracious miracles done
By my exalted brother. As for me,
No miracles I wrought, for I was only
A Voice from Heaven, that cried to evil doers
Repent !—repent ! But he who crieth now
Will long be heard, when John hath passed away.
I was appointed to a certain work,
And some of it is done. Much—much remains,
But not for me : a greater hand must do it.
Last night there came an incoherent storm
Of bursting clouds : a more enduring tempest
Will shake the earth and all its palaces,
When he whose footway I have heralded
Shall be enthronèd on the hearts of men !

JOHN'S DISCIPLES *appear outside the iron grating.*

FIRST DISCIPLE.

Master, they come to kill thee !

SECOND DISCIPLE.

Full of wine,
On his last birthday feast—and for a dance—
The King unto Herodias' daughter swore
To give what e'er she asked.

THIRD DISCIPLE.

She ask'd thy head!

JOHN.

From day to day have I consider'd death,
And should have done so thro' the solemn night
But that I slept too well, and that, moreover,
I dreamt of *him* who cometh after me,
To carry on my work, and do his own—
Far more expanding. He is of sweet discourse,
And winning gentleness, and hath indeed
A wary wisdom that shall serve more ends
Than my too rugged nature. Mark ye, how
By haste and rashness I have wasted power,
Which else had lasted longer for more good.
I glory in my martyrdom, but lament
It comes thus prematurely by my fault.
I pray your pardon. Follow Jesus, then,
When I am dead, I charge ye all, my sons—
My friends—my brothers—and God's blessing'tendye!

*[Sound of iron bolts withdrawn, and outer
doors opening.]*

CHORUS OF DISCIPLES.

The Son of God—yet son of man—
Fulfil the mission of his span,

First Martyr of salvation's plan,
The Valiant Soul who led the way
O'er old Idolatries and Hebrew Wrath,
Into the true Paternal path,
Where shines the loving day.
O, coming day! O men of future years!
Give John your heart's exalting tears
Through which the Light of Lights will smile
in every ray!

*Enter EXECUTIONER with an axe, attended
by a Captain of the Guard, and four guards
with bull's-hide thongs.*

*[A black Slave stands in the doorway with a large
silver charger, in which a momentary reflection of
the face of HERODIAS appears.]*

EXECUTIONER.

King Herod sends me to take off thine head!

JOHN.

Enough: thine axe doth speak for thee; but wherefore
These men with thongs?

EXECUTIONER.

'To bind thee.

JOHN.

'Tis not needful.

EXECUTIONER.

Had I not brought them, would'st thou as a lamb
Submit to death?

JOHN.

Perhaps thou hast done wisely.
The end being sure, thou savest me a low contest.
The strength of the great wilderness is in me—
These bones, thews, inward spirit—and I doubt not,
If that I would resist, this earth would groan
With several trunks beside me. 'Tis the forest
That speaks within me. Heed it not.

EXECUTIONER.

Would'st send
A message to the King?

JOHN.

He is more weak
Than cruel. 'Twere of no avail.

EXECUTIONER.

Would'st pray?
Short time hast thou for prayers.

JOHN.

I want no time:
My life has been one constant prayer. I am ready.

[*At a sign from the CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD, two guards thrust aside a barrier, showing an opening into a smaller and darker dungeon.*]

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD (*pointing*).

Behold the block that waits you !

JOHN (*calmly*).

I salute it

As a new friend, but will not bow to it.

[*JOHN enters the inner dungeon. The EXECUTIONER and two guards enter ; followed by the Slave bearing the silver charger.*]

The Voices of JOHN and the EXECUTIONER are heard from within.

Voice of the EXECUTIONER.

Kneel ! bow thine head !

Voice of JOHN.

No. That will I not do ;
But thus arm-folded die. Now, draw thy sword !

Voice of EXECUTIONER.

This axe were speedier.

Voice of JOHN.

Think not John will feel
Thy blows. His soul is too completely armed,

Fill'd, and uplifted ! Why dost thou so slowly
Draw forth thy sword ?

Voice of EXECUTIONER.

Behold, 'tis drawn—but pray thee !
Turn from me those bright pitying eyes—or else—

Voice of JOHN.

I will look upward, then ! I thank thee, friend.
Mine eyes the Kingdom seek whereto my spirit
Now beats her pinions for a sudden flight !
Uplift thy blade !—higher—more steadily—

Voice of EXECUTIONER.

'Tis high enough—but bend thy body forward !

Voice of JOHN.

Strike !—strike again ! My feet are still on earth—
Now—now I spring and poise ! O, God of Israel !

[At the third blow JOHN'S head is heard to fall.]

*Re-enter EXECUTIONER and guards, from the inner
dungeon, and then the Slave bearing JOHN'S head
in the charger.*

They pass through the first dungeon, and Exeunt.

SCENE V.

Exterior of the Castle of Machærus.

*Morning twilight breaking upon the outer bars of the
dungeon wall.*

*The Disciples of John are standing in front of the
dungeon bars.*

CHORUS.

O, Master ! whom we first did seek
Amidst the forests and the streams,
The desert sands, the stony peak—
A Prophet fed by heavenly dreams,
And clothed by faith in future beams !—

We follow'd thee, like moons that turn
Around a planet, and receive
The orbit course wherein they live,—
Pure fire in each transparent urn,
That glorifies yet doth not burn.

SUB-CHORUS, THE 1ST.

Erewhile men saw a naked sprite—
A sepulchre's phantasmal gleam—
A dancing meteor of the night—

Make a King's brain with fancies teem,
'Midst drunken passions of delight.

SUB-CHORUS, THE 2ND.

And see ! in yonder feasting hall—
O see ! a streaming charger borne !
Upon it, a divine man's head,
A tyrant's conscience to appal,
And haunt with pale smile his incestuous bed !*

SUB-CHORUS, THE 3RD.

The prickly-pear's bush clumps the shore ;
Rich carmine movements fill its breast ;—
The mastic, cypress, sycamore,
Have inward currents without rest :
The shell-fish close-lock'd, graved in sand,
Beneath the wave knows sea from land,
While in deep darkness tremulous ;—
But nothing moves in John's dark house !

SUB-CHORUS, THE 2ND.

Ah, now unto the tomb
Bear the dear headless form !
Cover it with earth—with tears—
With tears that feel like blood ;

* Mark vi. 14, 15, 16.

RAHMĀN.

RAHMĀN,*

The Apocryphal Book of Job's Wife.

CHAPTER I.

- ¹ *The holiness of Job, and his perfect life before God.* ² *The perfect life of Rahman, the wife of Job, and her great and faithful love towards her husband.* ³ *The love of Job and his wife for their children.* ⁴ *The substance and riches of Job.* ⁵ *The happiness of the sons and daughters of Job and of Rahman.* ⁶ *The religious care of Job for his children.* ⁷ *Satan appeareth before God, and, doubting the perfect holiness of Job, challengeth the Lord to a trial.* ⁸ *Satan obtaineth leave to tempt Job.*

THERE was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job ; and that man was upright and perfect, being one that feared God and eschewed evil.

² There was a woman also in Uz, whose name was Rahman ; and she was the wife of the holy and perfect man Job.

³ And this woman, like unto her husband Job, was

* *Rahmān*, (*Rachman* or *Rakh'man*), the name of Job's wife in the Arabic tradition, signifies *The Compassionate*.

upright and perfect, leading a righteous life and eschewing all evil.

4 And Rahman was a loving and faithful wife unto the upright and perfect man Job; and Job encompassed all his wishes with her alone.

5 And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters.

6 And the woman rejoiced in the memory of travail, because of the love she had for her husband Job, and for those children.

7 And in the Book of Job it is written that his substance was thousands of sheep, and thousands of camels, and many hundreds of working oxen, and hundreds of she-asses full of milk, and a very great household of men-servants and of women-servants;

8 So that this man was the greatest of all the men of the East.

9 And albeit this last saying seemeth not like unto a true saying, even though that Book had been written by some great prophet, nevertheless the man Job was peradventure the richest and happiest man in all the land of Idumæa;

10 Which is the land of Edom, which is the land of Esau, which is the land of Idumæa and Ausitis, which are the land of Uz, the inhabitants whereof are Edomite Arabs or people of Petrea;

11 Which is a district of many stones, but also of firs and palm-trees, and vines, and fig-trees, and date-trees, north of the Red Sea;

12 And a land of flocks and herds, and also of much passing commerce with richer countries of the East.

13 And Job's sons feasted in their houses, each son in his turn, and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them.

14 And they were all united in spirit, and were exceeding happy.

15 And when the days of their feasting were gone, Job sent and sanctified them; and he rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of all these children; for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.

16 But although it is thus recorded in the Book of Job, and although peradventure that Book was the writing of some great Gentile, yea, one filled with a holy spirit beyond all that went before him;

17 No sign or token is given of the evil prompting of that wicked thought and fear in the mind of the holy and perfect man Job, who had carefully reared all his children in holiness and the constant love and fear of God.

18 Now of this matter no one hath understanding, unless, indeed, it proceeded from the prompting and forerunning of the evil spirit haunting God's servant Job; and this was Satan.

19 But Job's wife, Rahman, had no such evil thoughts, and no such fears; wherefore she killed and burnt no creatures as offerings to the Lord.

20 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also in the midst of them.

21 And the Lord said unto Satan, Thou art of the fallen, and no longer like unto my sons. Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down in it, seeking to rule over men's souls, and accuse them of evil.

22 And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth; an upright and a perfect man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?

23 Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Thou singlest out and shewest forth this one man; but doth Job fear God for naught?

24 Hast thou not made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

25 But put forth thy destroying hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.

26 And the Lord said unto Satan, Not so. Thou and all thy wicked ones are set at naught. Against the substance of this perfect man will I put forth no hand of destruction; but this go thou and do. Behold, all that he hath, excepting his life, is in thy power.

27 So Satan accepted the challenge of God to go

and do his utmost ; and went forth from the presence of the Lord to seek means to win the gage and prize of power against the upright and perfect man Job, who dwelt in such great wealth and happiness in the land of Uz.

CHAPTER II.

1 Job's oxen and asses carried off, and his servants slain. 2 All his sheep and shepherds destroyed by fire. 3 His camels stolen, and their drivers slain. 4 Job's sons and daughters crushed to death. 5 Nevertheless Job blesseth God. 6 But Job's wife mourneth for her children.

NOW there was a day when Job's seven sons and his three daughters were all feasting happily in their elder brother's house ;

2 And there came a messenger unto Job on that day, and said, The oxen were ploughing, and the asses feeding in a field beside them ; and the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away ; yea, they have slain thy servants with the edge of the sword, and I only am escaped to tell thee.

3 And in the Book of Job it is written, that Satan was hasty beyond measure in his evil dealings with Job ;

4 For while the messenger of evil was yet speaking, there came another, who said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up thy seven thousand

sheep and their shepherds, and I alone am escaped to tell thee.

5 Then spake Job's wife to one of her household, and said, Peradventure that fire came not down from heaven, but came up from hell, seeing my husband Job is so holy and perfect a man, that God would not thus send fire from heaven to injure him ; yet Satan would injure him for his goodness.

6 But that servant had scarcely done speaking, when there came another, who said, The Chaldeans, collected in three bands, and rushed upon thy three thousand camels, and carried them away ; yea, and have slain all thy servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone am escaped to tell thee.

7 And in the Book of Job it is written, that Satan continued his evil with haste beyond measure ;

8 For while the last messenger was yet speaking, there came yet another messenger, who said, Thy seven sons and thy three daughters were happily eating, and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house ; and behold, there came a great wind from all sides, and smote the four corners of the house ; and it fell upon the young men and the young women, and they are all dead ;

9 Also upon all the servants, for I alone am escaped to tell thee.

10 Then Job arose and rent his robe, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped,

11 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's

womb, and naked shall I return to earth: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

12 In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

13 Neither could Job seek to charge God wisely in any way, seeing that Job knew nothing of the controversy, and, as it were, challenge and wager touching his constancy and faith.

14 But Job's wife lifted up her voice, and lamented the loss of her children; yea, the ten children she had borne, and nourished with her breast.

15 Also she mourned for the death of so many faithful servants; and for all that were burned.

16 And Rahman wept often in the night, when no one knew.

CHAPTER III.

1 Satan again appeareth before God, and renewing his challenge, obtaineth further leave to tempt Job. 2 Satan smiteth him with grievous sores. 3 Job's wife is overcome by the sight thereof. 4 Job reproveth her for her speech. 5 Job's three friends come to him, and Job's wife mourneth with them.

AGAIN there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord; and Satan came also in the midst of them.

2 And the Lord said unto Satan, Wherefore comest

thou again, being no longer a spirit of Heaven ; and from whence comest thou ?

3 And Satan answered the Lord, and said, I thirst to look into mine old abodes ; and I come from walking up and down in the earth, seeking to rule over many souls.

4 And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, an upright and a perfect man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?—and that he still holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me, by thy envious and wicked challenge, to swallow him up grievously, without cause on his part.

5 And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Lay a man bare to the skin as to all that he hath, even unto his children, and he will give everything to preserve his body's comfort ;

6 But put forth thine hand now, and touch his flesh and his bones grievously, and he will curse thee to thy face.

7 And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thy hand, all but his life.

8 So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils, from the sole of his foot unto his crown.

9 And when Job's wife saw this, remembering how fair and strong a man Job had ever been, she tore the robe on her breast, and covered her face with both hands, like unto claws upon her eyelids.

10 And Job took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal ; and he sat down among the ashes.

11 Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity ?—now bless God, if thou canst, and die. *

12 For I had rather behold thee lying dead, O my beloved, than thus to see thee a living curse unto thyself, with all thine uprightness and thy righteousness made of no account.

13 But Job said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What, shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil ? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

14 Now when certain of Job's friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came each one from his own place ; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite; for they had made an appointment together, to come to mourn with him, and to comfort him.

15 And when they raised their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voices, and wept ; and they rent each one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads towards heaven.

16 So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, as it is written, and none spake a word unto him, for they saw that his suffering and his grief were very great.

* In the Hebrew text, the literal reading may be either *bless*, or *curse*.

17 And Rahman sat down with his three friends all the time, and also held her peace.

18 But she sat a little behind Job, not being able to look upon his face.

CHAPTER IV.

1 Job curseth the day and services of his birth. 2 He bewaileth his life, and would prefer to die. 3 Eliphaz reproveth Job for want of religion, as to God's judgments. 4 Job's wife reproveth Eliphaz.

AFTER this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day.

2 And Job answered, as though some unheard voice had spoken unto him, and said, Let the night perish wherein it was declared, There is a man child conceived ; and the day wherein I was born :

3 Why died I not from the womb ? why did I not give up the ghost before I came forth ?

4 Why are life and light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in with misery of body, and with bitterness of soul ?

5 Other complainings of Job have been recorded, for his trouble was exceeding great, and his desire for death and the rest of the grave was poured out with many sighings.

6 Then spake Eliphaz the Temanite, and said, If we seek to commune with thee, be not grieved, for who can refrain from words ?

7 Behold thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands.

8 Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast sustained the feeble knees :

9 But now evil is come upon thyself, and thou faintest ; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled. Is this the uprightness of thy ways ?

10 Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished being innocent ? or where were the righteous cut off ?

11 Even as I have seen, they that plough iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.

12 Then spake Job's wife, and said, Lo, it is written, that the innocent have often perished ; for have not many young children perished cruelly, and have not I myself known many to perish who were doing no wrong ? yea, numbers of my husband's servants were devoured by the sword of robbers, and his shepherds were burned with all the sheep they tended.

13 Is not my husband Job a righteous man ? yea, God knoweth him for a perfect man ; and behold, where he sitteth amidst sores, and ashes, and deep sorrow !

14 For he hath ploughed in good fields, and sowed holiness, and now reapeth the fruit of iniquity !

15 Then spake Eliphaz many great and solemn things of visions of the night, and of a voice that had spoken unto him ;

16 And many solemn things spake he which bare no reference to Job's trouble, but to the power and

the works of God without number, marvellous in that day, and unsearchable ;

17 Who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth water upon the fields !

18 Who setteth up on high those that be low, that those which mourn may be exalted to safety !

19 Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth ; for He maketh sore, and bindeth up ; He woundeth, and His hands make whole.

20 At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh, and thou shalt know that peace is thy tabernacle.

21 Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be much, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth.

22 And Job's wife answered with deep grief, and said, Behold my children were all crushed by the falling of their brother's house ; and they are now beneath the earth, and the young grass springeth above them.

CHAPTER V.

1 *Job describeth his great trials, and wisheth God would destroy him.* 2 *His friends do not feel enough for him.* 3 *His sufferings are too great.* 4 *Bildad reproacheth Job.* 5 *Job's wife answereth Bildad.*

THEN Job spake, and said ; Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together !

2 For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea ; therefore my words are swallowed up.

3 For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit ; the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.

4 Oh that I might have my request, and that God would grant my expectation !

5 Even that it would please God to destroy me ; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off !

6 When I lie down I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone ? And I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day.

7 My flesh is clothed with worms, and clods of dust ; my skin is broken and become loathsome.

8 Therefore, I will not restrain my mouth ; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit.

9 How long wilt Thou not depart from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle ?

10 O Thou preserver of men ! why hast Thou set me as a mark against Thee, so that I am a burden to myself ?

11 And why dost Thou not pardon my transgression, whatever that may be, which I know not, and take away mine iniquity ?

12 Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said, How long wilt thou speak these things ? and how long shall the words of thy mouth be like a strong wind ?

13 Doth God pervert judgment, or doth the Almighty pervert justice ?

14 And Rahman answered, and said ; Yea, in this thing so seemeth it.

15 And Bildad said angrily, Behold God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he take the ungodly by the hand.

16 If thy children have sinned against Him, then hath He cast them away for their transgressions.

17 Then Rahman answered Bildad, and said, But my husband Job was an upright, an holy, and a perfect man; how then shall we perceive and understand God's justice towards him?

18 And of the sins of my seven sons and three daughters, what was their transgression in eating and drinking happily together, that a great wind should smite the four corners of the house, and crush them?

19 Also the servants, men and women servants, who were crushed with them?

20 But Bildad answered with a reproving voice, Behold there were sins done in secret, peradventure, by Job thy husband; also there were transgressions of thy sons and of thy daughters in the dark; as in the darkness of earth beneath the feet which no one seeth.

21 Wherefore, the great wind was sent to cast down the house upon all that were within.

22 And Rahman answered, not without tears, and said to Bildad the Shuhite, Behold, there are goodly tamarind trees in men's gardens which give shade when the sun is hot, and yield goodly fruit in their season;

23 If lightning strike the branches, and the trunk

becometh as dust, do men dig beneath the roots to seek for the lightning or the cause thereof?

24 Do they not rather look up to the sky? do they not strive to search through the dark clouds?

25 But Job made no sign of approval.

CHAPTER VI.

1 Job declareth his weakness and ignorance before God. 2 But he complaineth of unjust punishments. 3 Zophar reproveth Job. 4 Job answereth Zophar. 5 Job pleadeth his cause. 6 Eliphaz again reproveth Job. 7 Rahman answereth a few words. 8 Job reproacheth his friends.

THEN answered Job, and said, How should a man appear just before God?

2 If man will contend with God, he cannot answer Him one of a thousand.

3 Behold He taketh away, and who can turn Him aside?

4 For He breaketh me with a tempest, and multiplieth my wounds without cause.

5 This is one thing, therefore, I say it; He destroyeth the perfect as well as the wicked.

6 If the scourge slay suddenly, He will laugh at the trial of the innocent.

7 The earth is given into the hand of the wicked: He covereth the faces of the judges thereof; if not, then where and who is He?

8 Then answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said, Should not the multitude of words be answered, and should a man of lips be justified?

9 Should thy lies make men hold their peace?
and when thou mockest shall no man make thee
ashamed?

10 But, oh that God would speak, and open His
lips against thee!

11 And Job answered, and said, No doubt but ye
are the wise people, and wisdom shall die with
you.

12 But I have an heart as well as you; I fall not
lower than you in understanding: for who knoweth
not such things as the wisdom and power of God?

13 Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I
desire to reason with God.

14 But ye are forgers of lies; ye are physicians of
no value.

15 Be silent from me; leave me alone that I may
speak, and let come on me what will!

16 Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth, and
put my life in mine hand?

17 Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him;
but I will maintain mine own way before Him.

18 Where is he who will plead with me?—Woe
for me, if I hold my tongue I shall give up the
ghost!

19 Then spake again Eliphaz the Temanite, and
said, Should a wise man utter knowledge of wind, and
fill his belly with the east wind?

20 Should he reason with unprofitable talk? or
with speeches wherewith he can do no good?

21 Art thou the first man that was born ? or wast thou made before the hills ?

22 Hast thou heard the secret of God ? and dost thou keep wisdom within thyself ?

23 Why doth thine heart carry thee away ? are the consolations of God small with thee ?

24 And Rahman answered Eliphaz, and said, The heart of Job my husband is carried away by reason of his sufferings, which are all the consolations he hath :

25 For look well upon him now, where he sits covered with sores, and with ashes, and with his weight of sorrow, and with the heavy words of his friends ;

26 And call ye such things the consolations of God ?

27 Then answered Eliphaz and said, What is a man that he should be clean ? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous ?

28 For he stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty !

29 He runneth upon him, even on his neck, upon the thick bosses of his bucklers ;

30 Because he covereth his face with his fatness, and maketh collops of fat on his flanks.

31 And Rahman answered, and said, Behold all these words are as lies, that stare as madmen stare, and the substance of truth is before our sight to overwhelm them ;

32 For, see ye not Job my husband, where he now sits in his leanness and his misery !

33 And even when he was altogether prosperous, yet would thy words be as the worst of winds, which wise men abhor.

CHAPTER VII.

1 Job reproacheth his friends for their unmercifulness. 2 Bildad maketh cruel reply. 3 Job uttereth further complaints against his friends. 4 Then Zophar threateneth Job fiercely with God's wrath. 5 Rahman maketh reply as to God, but Job reproveth her.

THEN Job answered and said, I have heard many such things ; miserable comforters that ye are.

2 I also could speak as ye do ; if my soul were in your soul's stead, I could heap up words against you.

3 But I would rather strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips should assuage your grief.

4 But thou hast covered me with wrinkles, which seem as a witness against me ; and my leanness rising to view, beareth witness to my face.

5 He who hateth me teareth me ; he gnasheth upon me with his teeth ; mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me.

6 My face is foul with weeping, and on my eyelids is the shadow of death.

7 My friends scorn me ; but mine eye poureth out tears unto God.

8 O that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbour !

9 But as for you all, do ye return, and go now, for I cannot find one wise man among you :

10 Then spake Bildad, and said, His confidence, yea, the confidence of the wicked, shall be rooted out of his tabernacle, and it shall bring him to the King of Terrors !

11 His root shall be dried up beneath, and above shall his branch be cut off ; brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation !

12 He shall be driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world !

13 Then said Job, Have pity on me ! have pity on me, O ye my friends, for the hand of God hath heavily touched me.

14 My breath is strange to my wife from its foulness ; my servants know me not ; even young children despise me ; and my nearest friends have abhorred me.

15 But ye should rather say, Why persecute we him, seeing the evil root of the matter is in ourselves ?

16 Then arose Zophar the Naamathite in great anger, and said, Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon earth, That the triumphing of the wicked is short ?

17 His meat in his bowels is turned ; it is the gall of asps within him.

18 He hath swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them up again. God shall cast them out of his belly.

19 He shall not see the rivers, the floods, the brooks of honey and butter.

20 When he is about to fill his belly, God shall cast the fury of his wrath upon him, and shall rain it upon him while he is eating !

21 Then spake Rahman, and said, Who is this that speaketh for God, and what manner of man can he be who saith God shall do this, and shall do that ?

22 Ye know that my husband Job is not a Jew, or one bound within your ancient laws ;

23 For he breaketh free like an eagle from your strong nets, yea, like a strong man through iron gates :

24 Who is he that talketh of God's fury and wrath, as though he spake of a raging lion, or of a devil ? and of raining such things upon one who quietly eateth without offence ?

25 Surely this Naamathite doth blaspheme God in saying what fury and wrath shall do ; and even if he mean Satan, how, I pray ye, can he know Satan shall do these things ?

26 Then spake Job, and said, Be silent, O my wife, for Zophar in his anger confuseth the Evil Spirit and the Good, so that peradventure he knoweth not one from the other.

27 But as for me, I know and worship the Good only.

28 Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?

29 One dieth in the strength of his perfection, being wholly at ease and quiet;

30 His breasts are full of pails of milk; and his bones are moistened with marrow; and another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure.

31 Behold, I know your thoughts, and the devices ye wrongfully imagine against me.

32 Then spake again Eliphaz, asking with malice, Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous? or is it a gain to him that thou makest thy way perfect?

33 And after this Eliphaz made many lying accusations, having no care for truth or reason.

34 But Job answered, and said, God knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me I shall come forth as gold.

CHAPTER VIII.

1 *Job speaketh against adultery.* 2 *Bildad again troubleth Job.*
 3 *But Job reproveth Bildad, and laudeth the power of God.*
 4 *Job persisteth in his own righteousness; but submits himself to God's wisdom.* 5 *Job's former greatness compared with his present wretchedness.*

AND Job spake, and said, The eye of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me; and setteth his face in secret.

2 But Bildad accuseth much, and lacketh all charity towards me.

3 For I have ever held myself clean, and bowed myself down before the power of God.

4 Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering.

5 He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the world upon nothing.

6 All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils, my lips shall not speak wickedness.

7 Oh that I were as in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle ; when the Almighty was yet with me ; when my children were about me.

8 And Rahman, hearing these words, wept much, yet opened she not her mouth.

9 And Job continued to speak of the days of his prosperity, and said, When I went out to the gate through the city ; when I prepared my seat in the street ;

10 When I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil ;

11 The young men saw me, and hid themselves ; and the aged arose, and stood up.

12 The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth.

13 When the ear heard me, then it blessed me ; and when the eye saw me it gave witness to me ; because I delivered the poor that cried,

and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him.

14 The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me ; and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.

15 I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame ; I was a father to the poor ; and the cause which I knew not, I searched out.

16 My glory was new in me ; I sat chief, and dwelt as a king.

17 But now, they that are of fewer days than I, have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock.

18 And now am I their song, yea, I am their by-word ; they abhor me, and withhold not spittle from my face.

19 Because He hath afflicted me, they have let loose the bridle before me.

20 Terrors are turned upon me, they pursue my soul as the wind ;

21 I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to ostriches.

CHAPTER IX.

1 Job declareth his constant chastity. 2 Also his kindness and charity to all, and the justness of his life. 3 Job's three friends cease to speak, but Rahman reproacheth them. 4 Then Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, speaketh to them, and also to Job. 5 And Elihu greatly exalteth his own wisdom.

AND Job spake again, and said, I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?

2 Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity.

3 If my step hath turned out of the way, and mine heart walked after mine eyes, and if any blot hath cleaved to mine hands;

4 Then let me sow, and let another eat; yea, let my offspring be rooted out.

5 And Rahman gat ready to speak, but Job put forth his hand that she should not.

6 And Job furthermore spake, and said, If mine heart hath been led astray by a woman, or if I have laid wait at my neighbour's door;

7 Then let my wife grind unto another, and let others bow down upon her.

8 If I have seen any perish for want of clothing; if his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep;

9 If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate; then let mine arm fall from my shoulder-blade!

10 If, when I beheld the sun as it shineth, or the moon walking in brightness, my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand ; this also were an iniquity.

11 If my land cry against me ; if I have eaten the fruits thereof without paying money, or have caused the owners of the land to lose their life ;

12 Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and darnel instead of barley. The words of Job are ended.

13 Now his three friends ceased to answer Job because he was righteous in his own eyes.

14 But Rahman spake, and said ; This silence was good at first, and is good now.

15 When ye first came and sat down before my husband Job during the day, and during the night, and spake not, then were ye true friends :

16 But behold Satan put many words into your mouths, which ye dared to consider like God's words, reproving Job for unrighteousness.

CHAPTER X.

1 Elihu, the son of Barachel, joineth the other friends of Job. 2 He is full of wrath, and of vanity. 3 He reproveth Job's other friends, and also Job very severely. 4 Elihu declareth that his belly is ready to burst for want of speech, like wine that hath no vent. 5 Also that he speaketh in God's stead.

NOW a fourth friend had also come among them, even Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram :

2 And he was descended from Buz, the second son of Nahor the younger brother of Abraham : and it seemed that Elihu beheld a wise young man when he looked down in clear water.

3 Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu against Job, because Job justified his soul rather than God.

4 Also against Job's three friends was his wrath kindled, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job.

5 Now Elihu had waited till all had spoken, because they were elder than he ; and when he saw that there was no further answer in the mouth of those three men, then his wrath brake forth.

6 And Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, answered and said, I am young, and ye are very old, wherefore I feared to show you mine opinion.

7 I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom.

8 But there is a spirit in man ; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth some men understanding.

9 Great men are not always wise ; neither do the aged understand judgment.

10 Wherefore, I say, hearken unto me : I also will show mine opinion.

11 Behold, he hath not directed his word against me ; neither will I answer him with your speeches.

12 Now, the three friends were amazed ; they answered no more ; they left off speaking.

13 For was not he Elihu who spake ; even Elihu,

the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram, whose wrath was kindled with wisdom ?

14 And Elihu said, I will answer also my part ; I also will show mine opinion ; for I am full of matter ; the spirit within constraineth me.

15 Behold my belly is as wine which hath no vent ; it is ready to burst like new bottles.

16 I will speak that I may breathe ; I will open my lips and answer.

17 Wherefore, Job, I pray thee hear my speeches, and hearken to all my words.

18 If thou canst answer me, set thy words in order before me : stand up.

19 But Rahman with beseeching looks, prevented Job from rising.

20 And Elihu, the son of Barachel, continued his words of wisdom.

21 Behold, I am, even as thou hast perceived, in God's stead.

22 Behold, I also am formed out of the clay ; my terror shall not make thee afraid !

23 Man is chastened in many ways abroad ; also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain.

24 His flesh is consumed away, so that it cannot be seen ; and his bones that were not seen stick out.

25 Mark well, O Job, hearken unto me : hold thy peace, and I will speak.

26 If thou hast anything to say, answer me ; if

not, hearken unto me ; hold thy peace, and I shall teach thee wisdom.

CHAPTER XI.

1 Rahman speaketh in a parable. 2 Job desireth that she should speak no more. 3 Elihu, the son of Barachel, the Buzite, continueth his charges against Job. 4 And again declareth that he speaketh for God. 5 Job denieth this. 6 Satan appeareth to Rahman in a dream.

AND Rahman answered, and said, Suffer me a few words, and let thy servant put forth a parable, even a parable of the bird of the dawn.

2 Behold, the prince of morning, how proud a bird he is, and there is none other like unto him in the wings of his youth.

3 He standeth up on his toes to call the sun to rise, yea, the sun, for whom he first appeareth.

4 His voice pierceth the dawn like a spear, and he is a terror to the fleeting clouds of night.

5 Who is like unto him on earth, and who shall strive against the upliftings of his feathered shoulders, and his voice that speaketh for the coming sun ?

6 For he seemeth to cry aloud, Behold me, and who shall accept my challenge to battle ?

7 All the pearls of the dawn are mine, yea, and the pure gold that followeth.

8 Am I not the bird whose voice is proudest in the light of heaven; while it astonisheth the fields below ?

9 The ripe corn-fields droop their heads, and the valleys blush for their folly.

10 Then spake Job, and said, Enough of thy parable, and to spare ; I would hear Elihu to the end of his wrath and his reproaches.

11 And for all his false accusations, I pray God to pardon him, even as I pardon him.

12 Behold, he saith that he speaketh in God's light ;

13 But to me he seemeth no more than a man speaking out of darkness, and in the anger of his own opinion.

14 Now was Elihu, the son of Barachel, somewhat troubled in his mind, and knew not if he should make answer to Job, or to the wife of Job :

15 For he accounted the parable of Rahman as the poisoned arrow of an evil spirit like unto Beelzebub, and peradventure coming from a bow bended against himself.

16 But when Elihu had turned his looks away from gazing at Rahman, his wrath was presently kindled afresh against Job.

17 And Elihu said, How is it that thou knowest not the spirit of God speaking through me, and why canst thou not see my light ?

18 Hear my words, O ye wise men, and give ear unto me. For the ear trieth words as the palate tasteth meat.

19 Art thou not blind, and art thou not deaf, because the pride of thy steps leadeth thee to the pit,

and the song of thine own holiness preventeth the warnings that come up ?

20 For Job hath said, I am righteous !—what man is like Job, who drinketh up the scorning of other men like water ?

21 But he goeth in company with the workers of iniquity, and walketh with wicked men. Verily he is not of the tribes of Israel, but a Gentile and a blasphemer.

22 Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement ; I will not offend any more.

23 Let men of understanding tell me what they think, and let a wise man hearken unto me !

24 But Job addeth rebellion to his sin, and multiplieth his words against God.

25 But I will answer thee, and thy companions with thee.

26 Look unto the heavens, and behold the clouds are higher than thou !

27 God teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven.

28 And Job's wife opened her lips to speak ; but Job made sign unto her that she should say nothing.

29 And Elihu continued his speaking, and said, Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it.

30 And Job bowed down his head.

31 Elihu spake again, and said, Suffer me a little, and I will show thee that I have yet to speak on God's behalf.

32 Take heed, Job! regard not iniquity; for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction.

33 Now spake Rahman very humbly, and said, But suffer me, O Elihu! son of Barachel the Buzite, to relate the words of a dream:

34 For it came to pass last night, the evil spirit yea, Satan himself, appeared to me in a dream;

35 And Satan spake in my dream, and said, Thou hast heard what Elihu, the young man of wisdom, hath said many times of Job, and as speaking for God?

36 Yea, of Job, thy husband, hath Elihu spoken many times touching Job's wickedness, his want of integrity, the iniquity of his life.

37 Lo, I will comfort thine ear, O Rahman, with the tidings of what God himself hath said of Job thy husband;

38 God hath said unto me, and in presence of the Sons of God, Seest thou my servant Job, a perfect and an upright man? and there is none like unto him on earth.

39 Let all this console thee, then, as it may, seeing Job's great trials and sufferings are for his goodness and godliness.

40 Even as his sufferings console me, the Spirit of Evil.

41 For I have lost the wager that was made between God and myself; yea, I have lost the prize of power over the perfect man Job, which God hath won against me.

CHAPTER XII.

- 1 *Job's trouble of mind.* 2 *He commandeth that Rahman shall henceforth be silent.* 3 *Elihu again essayeth to speak for God.* 4 *God sendeth a wind from heaven.*

NOW when Job had heard Rahman his wife say all those things, he was greatly troubled in mind :

2 And he commanded that his wife should remain silent from that time ; nor was he consoled by her words.

3 For what he had heard did not satisfy his understanding in some things ; yet was his submission to God in nowise weakened.

4 Now Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram, gathered up his inwards to take wise counsel with himself.

5 And Elihu saw that it was best to scorn at all times the words of Satan ; yea, and to treat as naught what he said to Rahman in a dream :

6 For, saith Elihu to himself, it is common of old to say that some one appeared unto some other in a dream, or some one spake words in a dream ;

7 Which meaneth no more than that a man, yea, or a woman, dreamed such things :

8 And dreams are nothing real ; and sometimes they are the opposite of truth.

9 And so God may have said that Job was full of iniquity and one among the wickedest in the earth ;

10 For what may we not expect from the Prince of

Lies, yea, from Satan, if he appeared to Rahman in a dream ?

11 Therefore I will regard myself as one who was deaf ; and as one the wax of whose ears had hardened like unto the topaz of Ethiopia,

12 By too much listening to iniquities rising from the bowels of the earth.

13 So Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram, again turned the strength of his countenance upon Job ;

14 And Elihu said, Cease now and henceforward to exalt thy horn ; and let thy upliftedness lie in the dust !

15 For who teacheth like unto God ; or like those whom the Almighty ordaineth to show wisdom ?

16 Remember that thou magnify God's work, which men behold !

17 He maketh small the drops of water : they pour down rain according to the vapour thereof ;

18 Which the clouds do drop and distil upon man abundantly !

19 With clouds God covereth the light, and commandeth it not to shine by the darkness that cometh betwixt !

20 The noise thereof sheweth His threatening, and the cattle also show their fear of the hot vapour that riseth from the fields.

21 And Elihu also said, Hear attentively the noise of His voice, and the sound that goeth out of His mouth !

22 God thundereth marvellously with His voice ; great things doth He, which we cannot comprehend.

23 For He saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth ; likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of His strength.

24 By the breath of God frost is given ; and the breadth of the waters is straightened.

25 Also by watering He wearieth the thick cloud ; He scattereth His bright cloud :

26 He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for His land, or for mercy.

27 And Rahman again gat ready to speak, but Job, her husband, motioned that she should be silent.

28 So Elihu, the son of Barachel, continued to speak, and said, Hearken unto this, O Job ! stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God !

29 Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge ?

30 How thy garments are warm, when He quieteth the earth by the south wind ?

31 Thus spake Elihu, the son of Barachel, and while he was yet speaking there came a wind from heaven and across the place where they sat ;

32 And when the wind from heaven was gone, the three friends, Eliphaz, and Bildad, and Zophar, were no more seen ;

33 Neither was Elihu, the son of Barachel the

Buzite, of the kindred of Ram, descended from the second son of Nahor, the younger brother of Abraham, any more seen ;

34 But on the place where he had stood in his wrath, speaking for God, the green herbage rose up, and was refreshed in the air.

CHAPTER XIII.

1 A great wind riseth. 2 God speaketh to Job out of the whirlwind. 3 Job maketh a humble reply.

THE wind from heaven that swept away Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite, yea, and Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, who offered himself to speak instead of God, rose even to a great and solemn wind ;

2 And it lifted up mighty trees from the roots, as they had been tufts of weeds, and it cast abroad the broken branches and the shattered trunks :

3 And the sands of the desert were uplifted and mingled with showers of leaves that blackened the air with a whirling tempest.

4 Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said :

5 Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge, and when did I give leave unto the wrathful tongue of youth to speak for me ?

6 But thou, my servant Job, gird up now thy loins

like a man ; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.

7 Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth ? whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened ?

8 Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it broke forth as if it had issued out of the womb ?

9 When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness, a swaddling band for it, and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed ?

10 Have the gates of death been opened unto thee ? or hast thou seen the outer doors ?

11 Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow ? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail,

12 Which I have reserved against the time of trouble ; against the day of battle and war ?

13 Dost thou understand this ? declare, if thou hast understanding.

14 Hath the rain a father ? or who hath begotten the drops of dew ?

15 Out of whose womb came the ice ? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it ?

16 Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of water may cover thee ?

17 Canst thou send lightnings that they may go, or come, and say unto thee, Here we are ?

18 Who hath put wisdom in the inner parts ? or who hath given understanding to the heart ?

19 Who can number the clouds in wisdom? or who can stay the bottles of heaven,

20 When the dust groweth into hardness and the clods cleave close together?

21 Gird up thy loins, and declare if thou hast understanding of all these things.

22 Then Job fell down upon the ground, and worshipped;

23 And Job answered, and said, Lord, thou knowest that I am without understanding or knowledge of all these things;

24 Also thou knowest that thy servant can do none of those great works which Thou hast named;

25 Also thou knowest that it is not possible for the wisdom of man to understand the wisdom of God in all things;

26 For if man understood God's wisdom in all things, then would there be no false gods, but only one religion.

27 But my misery of mind and the sufferings of my body are great, yea, as manifest as are my ignorance and my want of power.

CHAPTER XIV.

1 *God again speaketh to Job. 2 Rahman desireth to speak, but is afraid. 3 Job maketh sign that she should be silent. 4 God again sheweth the wonders of created things, beyond man's capacities.*

AND again God spake to Job, and said, Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth, or canst thou mark when the hinds do calve?

2 Canst thou number the months that they fulfil? or knowest thou the time when they bring forth?

3 Now Rahman made as though she would fain whisper something to Job, but Job made sign to her that she should not do so.

4 And Rahman was afraid to answer, what seemed but a small thing to answer, so she held her peace.

5 And God spake again to Job, and said, Who hath sent out the wild ass free, whose house I have made the wilderness?

6 Will the rhinoceros be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib?

7 Canst thou bind the rhinoceros with a band in the furrow, or will he harrow the valleys after thee?

8 Wilt thou trust him because his strength is great, or wilt thou leave thy labour to him?

9 Wilt thou believe him, that he will bring home thy seed, and gather it into thy barn?

10 Gavest thou lustrous eyes to the feathers of the proud bird ; or wings and strong legs unto the ostrich,

11 Which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in dust ?

12 For she is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers ; her labour is in vain, without fear ;

13 Because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath He imparted to her understanding.

14 What time she lifteth up herself on high, she scorneth the horse and his rider.

15 Moreover God here spake many glorious words concerning the horse ; and none of these creatures were of Job's creating.

16 Moreover, God said of the hawk, Doth she fly by thy wisdom, and stretch her wings towards the south ?

17 Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high ?

18 She dwelleth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place.

19 From thence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off.

20 Her young ones also suck up blood ; and where the slain are, there is she.

CHAPTER XV.

1 Satan appeareth to Rahman in a dream, and giveth her counsel. 2 Rahman is troubled and afraid, and telleth her dream to Job. 3 Job directeth her to eschew the counsel of Satan.

NOW Satan, having treasured up all that the Lord had said unto Job, appeared to Rahman in a dream ;

2 And furthermore, she again heard Satan speak to her in her dream ;

3 And Satan said, Lo ! we are all without the wisdom of God, neither can any of us do the great things that God hath done.

4 But some of the knowledge that God hath displayed unto thy husband, the ruined man and leper, Job, is known to many men, or peradventure will be known to men in future ages ;

5 Yet if all this knowledge and power of creating things were still more than the Lord hath displayed unto Job, His Voice answered in no wise the questions and complaints of thy husband ; verily it seemed as from the deafness of a mighty whirlwind :

6 For what indeed hath Job to do with the abode and the nature of the wild ass and the rhinoceros, the hawk, the ostrich, and the lion ?

7 Neither do any of those great works of the Lord explain to Job, the ruined man, and the man

covered with sores and wounds, the cause and reason of his sufferings ;

8 Seeing that Job had never been a wicked or a rebellious man, following any of the counsel of evil spirits like unto myself ;

9 But had always been an upright and a perfect man in the eyes of God.

10 Then do thou, when next the Lord biddeth Job to gird up his loins and speak like a man, do thou, who art a good and faithful wife, counsel thy husband Job that he should humbly declare himself unable to understand the justice of his sufferings.

11 Now was Rahman sorely discomfited and afraid at what she had heard, and of the counsel given unto her by Satan.

12 And she told Job her husband all that Satan had said to her.

13 And Job answered, and said, How strong soever the reasoning may be, if it be strong at all, and however wise the counsel may be, if it be wise at all, rest thou content that, as it cometh from the Spirit of Evil, it cannot be good ;

14 And I will turn to it an ear of stone, even as I tell thee to place a stone upon the memory of the words of this dream, yea, a tomb-stone upon it, which should never be removed.

CHAPTER XVI.

1 God again calleth upon Job to answer as to God's judgment and thunder. 2 Also as to behemoth. 3 Also as to leviathan. 4 Job humbleth himself yet more before the Lord.

MOREOVER, the Lord spake unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Gird up thy loins now, like a man ; I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto Me :

2 Wilt thou disannul My judgment? wilt thou condemn Me, that thou may'st be righteous?

3 Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like Him?

4 Look on every one that is proud, and bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place.

5 Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.

6 Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee ; he eateth grass like an ox.

7 He moveth his tail like a cedar ; the sinews of his stones are wrapped together. His bones are as strong pieces of brass.

8 He is the chief of the ways of God :

9 Moreover, canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook, or his tongue with a cord, which thou lettest down?

10 Will he make many supplications unto thee ?
will he speak soft words unto thee ?

11 Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons ? or
his head with fish spears ?

12 His scales are his pride, shut up together as
with a close seal. Out of his mouth go burning
lamps, and sparks of fire leap out.

13 Do I speak like his Creator, or as one who hath
never seen him ? Answer if thou canst.

14 He esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten
wood ; darts are counted as stubble : he laugheth,
at the shaking of a spear.

15 Then Job answered the Lord, and said, Behold,
I am as nothing before Thee !

16 Nothing of any greatness can I do ; and of
many of the great things Thou tellest me I have no
knowledge ;

17 Neither have I enough wisdom to understand
all God's wisdom.

18 I will now lay my hand upon my mouth ; once
have I spoken ; yea, twice, and more, but I will
proceed no further.

19 I have heard of Thee by the hearing of mine
ear, even out of the whirlwind ; but now mine eye
seemeth to herself to see Thee.

20 Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust
and ashes.

21 But in no wise did God vouchsafe reply to any
of the complaints and reasonings of Job, or give ear

to Job's desire for knowledge as to the mysteries of God's justice, and the life of man.

CHAPTER XVII.

1 God dismisseth Eliphaz, and Bildad, and Zophar as deficient in wisdom as in friendship. 2 Then God restoreth Job to health and prosperity, and forgiveth the doubts and backslidings of Rahman. 3 Job's new friends. 4 God giveth him increased substance, and promiseth him other sons and daughters.

AND it was so, that after the Lord had spoken those last words to Job, and heard his last reply, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends ;

2 For ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, as My servant Job hath.

3 Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks, and seven rams, and go to My servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering ;

4 And My servant Job shall pray for you ; for him will I accept ; lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of Me the thing which is right, like My servant Job.

5 So Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did as the Lord commanded them.

6 Touching Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram, who had in his wrath spoken

instead of God, as he said, the Lord took no note of him, nor of any of his words, even as though he had never been.

7 And the Lord accepted Job, and restored him at once to health of body, and of mind, and of spirit, and gave him twice as much substance as he had before.

8 And God forgave Rahman all her doubts and backslidings, because of the love she had for her husband Job.

9 Then came there unto Job all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance, and did eat bread with him in his house :

10 And they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him :

11 For they did not know that Satan had been the cause of it, by God's consent, as by a challenge or trial.

12 Every man also gave Job a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.

13 And Rahman forbore to remind them that they did not show themselves when Job sat a miserable and childless man, in dust and ashes, and covered with sores.

14 But they saw that a shade passed over her face when she welcomed them.

15 And the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen

thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she-asses.

16 The Lord also promised that Job should have seven other sons and three more daughters ; and that in all the land there should be no sons more goodly, and no daughters so fair, as those sons and daughters of Job.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1 Satan again appeareth to Rahman, and confesseth himself vanquished. 2 He fully admitteth the Lord's victory, but sheweth at what cost. 3 Satan maketh a final effort to cause Rahman to rebel against the Lord's dealings with her and with her husband.

NOW Satan, being overcome in his challenge, once more appeared to Rahman in a dream, and spake unto her :

2 And he told her of all that had gone before.

3 And Satan in an humble voice said unto Rahman, Behold, the Lord hath more knowledge than I have, and His wisdom is greater than mine.

4 In my opinion and in my judgment have I been at fault, and in my challenge and gage I have been vanquished.

5 Yet, behold, thou, who art so good a woman, and so loving a wife and mother, at what great cost the Lord hath won his victory over me !

6 For it hath cost the lives of all thy faithful

servants who were tending thy oxen and thy asses when the Sabeans fell upon thy servants with the edge of the sword :

7 And it hath cost the lives of all thy faithful shepherds and shepherdesses who were burned alive together with the seven thousand sheep, all of which were as the sweet savour of a burnt offering unto the nostrils of the Lord, far greater than any other burnt offering that was ever sacrificed, even by the heathen to their gods.

8 And it hath cost the lives of all thy faithful servants and their families, who tended upon thy three thousand camels and were slain by the Chaldeans.

9 And it hath cost the lives of thy seven goodly sons, and thy three fair daughters, all of whom were crushed by the falling of their elder brother's house, together with all his servants save one.

10 Peradventure, in some future age, some new prophet of Arabia or of Judea, shall cast doubt over these things, as having been only shadowed forth to try Job ;

11 For it shall then be found out, that when God, or any of his great lawgivers and captains do, or order dreadful things, or when any great things of doubtful meaning, or of no sense, are declared, then the same shall be regarded as figurative only ;

12 And thus the true and the untrue may be made to exchange places, as seemeth best and most cunning to the priests and doctors :

13 But I, Satan, know that all these slaughters, in

my struggle with the Lord concerning thy husband Job, were true slaughters, knowing, as I do, whose hand was put forth.

14 Furthermore, the victory in this battle hath been at other costs.

15 For it hath been at the cost of Job thy husband's peace of mind and health of body ; seeing that he became as one cursed in his thoughts, and eaten up by leprous sores, upright and perfect as he was.

16 And it hath cost him, even as it hath also cost thee, O fair and loving wife, the vexation of spirit caused by the cruel and wrongful words of Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite ;

17 Also the vexation of the high and wrathful voice of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, whom thy parable compared unto the high voice of the bird that awakeneth the sun that he should rise, and defieth the sun to battle, but whose voice God scorned to notice.

19 Now Rahman was greatly troubled in her dream, and sought to struggle with herself that she would hear no more of Satan's words ;

20 But her struggles and her tossings were of no avail, and she was sorely grieved in her sleep.

21 So Satan again spake to her in her dream, and Satan said, Surely I have lost my contest and my pledge, and I must pay unto the Lord the forfeit of much humility for my wrong opinion touching Job :

22 And God hath verily won the contest, and the glory thereof, but which indeed are as nothing ;

23 For surely God knew how it would be before it was ; and as for the overthrow of my opinion, what is it worth to the Lord ?

24 And what value can God set upon his victory in this matter ?

25 But those who have been verily the losers and the sufferers in this question and contest, are Job thy husband, and thyself.

26 Now Rahman again essayed in her dream to give some answer to Satan, and she said to him, The Lord hath restored Job to health and to prosperity, and hath given unto him twice as many sheep as he had before, and twice as much substance in all things.

27 But Satan answered her in her dream, and said Of the slaughtered servants, the burned servants, and the servants that were crushed in the cost of this victory over me, the Lord sayeth naught ; neither doth He make mention of thy sons and thy daughters that were crushed ;

28 But God promiseth to Job seven more sons, and three more daughters.

29 Now thou knowest, O fair and virtuous wife of the upright and perfect man Job, that he did ever cling unto thee only, eschewing other wives, and concubines, though they were lawfully at his beckoning according to your custom in the East.

30 Now therefore, bethink thee, and get thee ready for more periods of travail.

31 And although these seven sons that thou shalt bear be goodly sons, and thy three daughters the fairest in the land, they cannot wipe out thy memory of those that were sacrificed in order that God should win this victory over me.

32 And Rahman sat upright in her bed with a pale face, and she cast back her hair that was lank with sweat, and threw her arms up towards heaven, as she awoke from the struggles and throbbings of this dream of what Satan had spoken unto her.

CHAPTER XIX.

1 Rahman telleth her dream to Job, and all that Satan had again said unto her. 2 Job maketh reply as before. 3 Rahman is troubled as to future children, and other matters. 4 Job telleth her that God will look upon her according to her heart. 5 How all the Lord's promises came to pass. 6 The rest of the days of Job and his wife Rahman, and their death after seeing four more generations.

NOW when Job looked upon his wife, he saw that she was greatly troubled, and asked her the cause thereof.

2 Then Rahman told Job that Satan had again appeared unto her in a dream ; and she told him also all that Satan had said unto her.

3 So they were both greatly troubled, and sat beside each other in silence for some while.

4 Then Job answered and said, The reasoning of the wicked may be good reasoning, but water from a deep well that holdeth poison is not the less poisonous for its clearness.

5 Though it be clear to the eye, it may offend the nose, and if it offend not the eye or the nose it may yet treasure up torment for the bowels.

6 So say I unto thee, O Rahman my wife, even as I said unto thee before, whatever words proceed from the Spirit of Evil cannot be good words !

7 They must be as evil as the fountain from which they fell, and no good man should drink thereof, neither should any good woman.

8 If thou couldst not answer Satan in thy sleep, neither can I, who am awake, answer him.

9 And I shut up the eyes and the ears of my understanding, like unto a wall of stone ; yea, like unto a rock that knoweth not if it be day or night, and that feeleth nothing of the waves that dash themselves to foam about his head.

10 So Job gave no thought to any of the words of Satan ; and Rahman also strove not to think upon anything that Satan had said.

11 But, after a time, Rahman once more spake to Job about her dream, as to what God had said touching more sons and daughters.

12 Then Job turned aside, and bade her trust in God, for surely God would look upon her according to her heart, and deal with her according to his wisdom.

13 So Rahman humbled herself before God, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped.

14 And the Lord forgave Rahman for all her doubts and backslidings, because of her love for Job her husband :

15 Also because of her grief as a mother for the loss of her children :

16 Also because of her sorrow when she heard of the slaughter of so many faithful servants, and of the burning of so many shepherds and shepherdesses together with the flocks they were tending.

17 And God sent his angel Gabriel, who appeared unto Rahman in a dream ;

18 And the angel of the Lord told Rahman that her woman's fairness and strength should be preserved unto her during many years, for the Spirit of God would come down upon her, so that she should bear unto Job her husband ten more children.

19 And thus should Job, her husband, find no need to take unto himself other wives, or concubines.

20 So the latter end of Job was more full of blessings than the beginning, inasmuch as the birth of more children, and doubling the number of his cattle, and his sheep, his she-asses, and his camels, could recompense him.

21 And Rahman spake to some of her kindred, and said, Behold my husband Job, by his undeserved long-suffering, and his faith which could not be moved, hath won a great victory for God, and for man :

22 And albeit the Spirit of Evil, yea Satan himself, hath said that the victory to God is of little worth,

because the Lord foresaw it all ; yet is Job's victory for man like unto a tree that shall never die, but bear goodly fruit for ever.

23 And there were born unto Job and Rahman his wife seven more sons, and three more daughters ;

24 And Job called the name of the first daughter Jemima, or Dove of Arabia ; and the name of the second Keziah, or Sweet-spice ; and the name of the third, Keren-happuck, or Horn-of-Plenty.

25 And their father gave them inheritance among their brethren.

26 After this lived Job and Rahman a great many years, and saw their sons, and their son's sons, even four generations.

27 And Job and Rahman lived to the end of their time as those who are blessed and in happiness :

28 But Job being a man, and Rahman being a woman, their thoughts on some things were different, even as their feelings were different ;

29 And God saw that Rahman was an upright spirit, and a perfect woman, who eschewed evil.

30 So Job and Rahman died, being very old and full of years ;

31 And great was the number of their kindred who mourned for them ; yea, with long mourning and with many thoughts.





JUDAS ISCARIOT.

JUDAS ISCARIOT;

A MYSTERY.

In Two Acts.

PREFACE.



IT had frequently occurred to me that the story of Judas Iscariot contained elements of a tragedy of a more terrible kind than could be developed from any other event in history ; but for the first idea of attempting it, I am indebted to an Ordination Sermon delivered by the late Archbishop Whateley. It was printed at the earnest request of many Priests and Deacons.

“In contemplating,” says the Archbishop, “the case of Judas Iscariot, you should first remark that there is no reason for concluding, as unreflecting readers often do, that he was influenced solely by the paltry bribe of thirty pieces of silver (probably equal, in silver, to about sixty shillings ; and in value to perhaps about twice that sum in the present day) to betray his Master, and to betray Him designedly to *death*. That Jesus possessed miraculous powers Judas must have well known ; and it is likely that, if he believed Him to be the promised Messiah, who was about to establish a splendid and powerful kingdom (an expectation which it is plain was entertained by all the Apostles) he must have expected that

his Master, on being arrested and brought before the Jewish rulers, would be driven to assert his claim, by delivering himself miraculously from the power of his enemies; and would at once accept the temporal kingdom which the people were already eager (and would then have been doubly eager) to offer him. That if our Lord had done this, He would have been received with enthusiastic welcome, as the nation's deliverer from Roman bondage, there can be no doubt; since He would thus have fulfilled the fondly-cherished hopes of the multitude who had just before brought Him in triumph to Jerusalem. And it was most natural for Judas to expect that Jesus *would* so conduct himself, if delivered up to his enemies. As for his *voluntarily* submitting to stripes and indignities, and to a disgraceful death, when is was in his power to call in to his aid 'more than twelve legions of angels,' no such thought seems ever to have occurred to the mind of Judas, any more than it did to the other Apostles.

"But the difference," continued the learned Archbishop, "between Iscariot and his fellow-apostles was, that, though all had the same expectations and conjectures, *he* dared to *act* on his conjectures, departing from the plain course of his known duty, to follow the calculations of his worldly wisdom, and the schemes of his worldly ambition; while *they* piously submitted to their Master's guidance, even when they 'understood not the things that He said unto them.'"

Similar opinions were, according to Theophylact, entertained by some of the Fathers. Those who care to study the question, would do well to consult Whitby's *Annotations on St. Matthew*.

Having adopted the view of Judas Iscariot thus originated and supported, it only remained for me to

guard against the evil of being led away by the freshness and force of this new view, into making a sort of hero of so treacherous a disciple. This danger has been studiously avoided. His gross personal interests, his craving for worldly pomp, and power, and exterminating vengeance upon all enemies, are palpably displayed as the antitheses to all true heroism; his dreadful remorse and terrific end are the final attestation of his character, and one extenuating feature according to Scripture. He is to be shuddered at—never admired; trembled for (not, I hope, without a deep touch of human compassion for his anguish)—but never sympathized with. It has been my constant object to keep him standing hideously alone—as he ought to stand. For the rest, I have helped to disabuse the world of one of its incongruous ‘monsters.’ The crime of Judas is quite revolting enough, without supposing him to have been actuated by a mere purposeless malignity, or by a sordid motive of the most trivial kind. That the world, for the most part, will not yet be prepared to give up one of its greatest ‘monsters,’ is probable; but at all events, the question is open to discussion. Something of the same kind also applies to another character introduced in this tragedy. If any judge ever did the most he could safely do to save the life of one brought before him, certainly Pontius Pilate was that judge. That he played a ‘double part’ does not alter the fact.

I should ill requite my obligations to Archbishop Whateley—obligations, which at the same time com-

prise my profound respect for so many of his public labours, and a grateful sense of personal recollections—if I allowed it to be supposed that any other views of characters and actions, or any other portions of the dialogue in the following scenes, were attributable for their tone and purpose to the same source. For all, except as relates to the motives of the principal character, I alone am responsible.

A few words, and forms of expression, which the more correct translations render differently, have been retained according to the versions of the Bible in general use, for the sake of the greater poetic force conveyed in them.

I have cast this Scriptural Tragedy in the form of the old English Mystery Plays, as being the class to which it more legitimately belongs, and also with a view to remove it as far as possible from the dramatic literature of our own day, in reverence to the general bearings and atmosphere of the subject.

R. H. H.

Truth dwels in gulphs, whose deepes hide shades so rich
That Night sits muffled there in clouds of pitch,
More darke than Nature made her ; and requires
(To cleare her tough mists) heaven's great fire of fires—
To wrestle with these heaven-strong Mysteries.

CHAPMAN.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

JOHN,	}	Disciples of CHRIST.
PETER,		
JAMES,		
JUDAS ISCARIOT,		

PONTIUS PILATE, Governor of Judæa.

CAIAPHAS, High Priest of the Temple of Jerusalem.

ANNAS, Sargon (or Second to Caiaphas) and Father-in-law of
Caiaphas.

NICODEMUS, a Pharisee.

LAZARUS of Bethany.

JOSEPH, a rich man of Arimathea.

PHARISEES, SCRIBES, PRIESTS.

MARY, the Mother of CHRIST.

MARY'S SISTER.

MARY, the Wife of Cleophas.

MARY, the Sister of Lazarus.

MARY MAGDALENE.

CLAUDIA, the Wife of Pontius Pilate.

Elders, Centurions, Soldiers, Attendants.

JUDAS ISCARIOT.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Public Walk in Jerusalem.

A PHARISEE is on his knees praying aloud at the corner of a street. A crowd gathered round.

PHARISEE.

NOT that the hand of man can be raised up,
Except as pre-ordained ; not that one pulse
Can beat beyond the circle of its law,
One thought be called our own ; but that our souls
Must struggle virtuously for virtue's sake,
Setting down all we gain as merely given,
Since God ordains free-will as part of fate.
Holy ! thrice holy Law of Ancient Days !
Immortal life in ever-changing shapes
To some of us is promised—such as keep
The old traditions like a mirror bright,

Wherein we see the doctrines, rules, and forms,
And mystic truths, the which, if read aright,
Crown with pure sanctity the prostrate mind.

[Falls on his face.

[Exeunt people with murmurs of applause.

*Enter a SCRIBE ; and a PHARISEE dressed in sack-cloth,
with fine linen underneath.*

SCRIBE.

Our teaching—all !—opposing all our teaching !

SECOND PHARISEE.

And our high doctrine.

FIRST PHARISEE (*rising*).

Speak ye not of Jesus ?

SECOND PHARISEE.

Of him, beyond all men who yet have raised
Schisms, and false doctrines, and by arts misled
The ignorant people—the ungrateful blind ones,
Fond of wild parables flattering to their hopes
And laxity of life.

SCRIBE.

Reproved by us
In schools, and synagogues, and lecture halls,

Whene'er we teach ; also reprov'd and warn'd
In all our books and writings—but in vain ;
Him they still follow.

FIRST PHARISEE.

I will pray against him
In all the public places, and denounce
His blasphemies against the ancient laws,
And our interpretation.

SCRIBE.

Lo ! where comes
One of his followers !

SECOND PHARISEE.

A man whose face
Is full of pride—lacking all reverence.
(*Aside*) I fain would tread him down.

Enter JUDAS.

SCRIBE.

He is well known.

FIRST PHARISEE (*to* JUDAS).

How cometh it to pass that thou walkest abroad
among holy men, and virtuous people who obey the
law and its expounders,—thou thyself being a
follower of false prophets, and a believer in heresies
and lies ?

SCRIBE.

Dost thou also presume to teach, being thyself untaught in all things but devilishness and the hopes of fools?

SECOND PHARISEE.

Thou bearest the face of one who hath some cause for pride; and yet thou art the slave of a blasphemer.

JUDAS.

Rabbi, this is not so. I follow no heretic, but one who hath a divine faith, and who teacheth it; who hath no devils, but is a caster out of devils from others; neither is he a fool, but rather a teacher of heavenly wisdom. Wherefore he is no blasphemer, neither have I cause for shame in the fact that I follow him. Pride rather, in the hope of things which are to come.

[*The SCRIBE and PHARISEES confer apart.*]

SCRIBE.

He saith what he must say, being a servant of this impostor.

FIRST PHARISEE.

The pomegranate seed telleth what tree it fell from; for it is like unto none other seed; so doth this man betray his master's preaching.

SECOND PHARISEE (*loudly*).

He hath likewise an evil spirit and a proud, of his

own nature; else would he show reverence in high places, and in due season.

JUDAS.

Masters, this do I constantly, though not here.

SECOND PHARISEE.

Where dost thou show reverence; before whom, and in what places?

JUDAS.

In the presence of my Lord and Master Jesus, who is Christ, and in the Temple of the True Spirit.

SCRIBE.

Which temple callest thou the Temple of the True Spirit?—is not the great Temple of Jerusalem the temple of the True Spirit?

FIRST PHARISEE.

Is it not?

SCRIBE (*aside to PHARISEES*).

Let be—let be: now will he utter blasphemy, and so become amenable to death by the law.

JUDAS.

All temples are of the True Spirit wherein the truth is taught; and wheresoever Christ teacheth, there will ye find the temple of the True Spirit.

SCRIBE.

He answereth cunningly, and by his lesson.

JUDAS (*aside*).

And it shall have dominion over all the earth !

FIRST PHARISEE.

Tell us now, and speak no longer with a double tongue, wherefore followest thou this man Jesus ? The motives of his preaching, what are they but the zeal of one who seeks to climb to a high place, perhaps to the highest place, even to that of the High Priest of Jerusalem ?

SCRIBE.

Or, being mad, perchance he would be a High Priest and Prince over all other High Priests.

SECOND PHARISEE.

Aspiring, moreover, in the summit of that madness, to the throne of Judea.

FIRST PHARISEE.

Thereto he leadeth an ungodly and a vicious life, consorting with publicans and sinners, profaning the Sabbath with work, and declaring to women of vicious courses that their sins are forgiven them.

SCRIBE.

In secret he doth many evil things. He is followed by divers women, and by two or three in especial.

JUDAS.

Openly ; and in secret doth he nothing. This ye know very well.

FIRST PHARISEE.

We know it not as ye say. We believe otherwise than ye say.

SCRIBE.

Behold the story this carpenter's son telleth of his miraculous birth, whereby he seeketh to hide the wickedness of her that bare him. Of his carpenter father never maketh he mention, as though he knew not the man, but exalteth himself into the Son of God in a diviner sense than any of us are sons of God !

FIRST PHARISEE.

What manner of man is he who uttereth blasphemies like these, and yet prevaieth over a multitude, so that they kneel down and bless his feet, and follow him whithersoever he listeth ?

JUDAS.

They follow him because they believe in him ; and desert the teaching of the Scribes, and the austere hypocrisy of the Pharisees, because they know there is no truth in your hearts. Therefore do his followers multiply daily, while yours decrease.

FIRST PHARISEE.

This folly runs too fast. It must be stopped.

JUDAS (*aside*).

Too fast!—oh far too patiently and slow, else would none dare utter these things.

FIRST PHARISEE.

The blossoms of the fig are secret and hidden from the light, and evil thoughts ripen in darkness.

SECOND PHARISEE.

Thou hast speedily answered all our accusations that were in the lesson thou hast been taught, but when we tell thee him thou followest goest too fast, and must come to his end, then speakest thou naught.

SCRIBE.

His miracles, also, and the cures that he hath wrought, what are they?

FIRST PHARISEE.

Are they not the work of an unclean spirit?—of devils, which defile us even in the hearing of their deeds?

SECOND PHARISEE.

Let us to the baths—let us wash ourselves and purify ourselves from all this wickedness.

[*Exeunt* PHARISEES.]

JUDAS (*aside*).

I would that Jesus could feel these taunts even

as I feel them; then would he command Beelzebub with a legion of devils to seek abode in these men's breasts, and with the struggle for more space wherein to curse and to destroy, thereby torment them terribly, and urge them to and fro as with a fiery wind pent up. I would he did this at once, and so enforced their belief in his power, and in his mission upon earth.

SCRIBE.

Thou reasonest, Judas, upon our words, and taking counsel with thyself, peradventure dost repent thee. Wilt thou have wisdom, and wilt thou do a righteous act?

JUDAS.

What act?

SCRIBE.

It were a virtuous thing to give this impostor into the hands of the law. Verily, the reward would be forthcoming.

JUDAS.

Go thy ways. I took thee for a buyer and seller of lies, and am not deceived.

SCRIBE.

Art thou not that Judas who beareth the bag of coin for Jesus and his followers; the treasurer of the

son of a Nazarene carpenter, yea and of his fishermen? Art thou not he who putteth his private hand into the common purse whensoever the vice of his blood calleth for food?—and, now dost thou seek to look virtuous, and take pride in an honest palm? Verily thou art a weak knave who followest the footsteps of one who is mad with his own folly.

[*Exit* SCRIBE.]

JUDAS (*walking to and fro*).

Would I were Christ!—or that the power he holds
So placidly, were given to my hand
For one short hour! Why moveth not his work
More rapidly and widely, since the time
Crieth aloud for it, and Misery sits
Wringing her hands at poor men's doors? The
people,
Oppressed by priests, and pharisees, and scribes,
Grievously hate them, and desert their teaching
To follow Jesus; yet he slowly walks
In dangerous places where we may be stoned,
Scourged, crucified, imprisoned, slain by the sword,
While meekly he pursueth still his way,
Secure, by reason of the Spirit of God
Which ever dwelleth in him. Martyrdom
Walks always by our side, sits by our bed,
And smileth on our hunger and scant robes.
But, if escaping, are we to grow old
In houseless journeys, toil, and penury;
Jeer'd, scoff'd at, and reviled from manhood's prime

Till our white beards touch close upon the grave,
And we drop in unhonoured? All the signs
And tokens of a season ripe for change,
Greater than man e'er dreamed of, fill the sky,
And the earth mutters underneath my feet
" 'Tis time! 'tis time!" The overthrow and scattering
Of the old thrones, temples, and synagogues,
Halls of injustice, schools of ignorant scribes,
And palaces of pharisaic pride,
Whose owners preach humility—all hang
Upon the breath of Jesus. He passeth on,
Teaching and healing, nor can I discern
One smile of secret consciousness that soon
All this shall end, and his true kingdom come.

(He pauses thoughtfully).

Somewhat he lacketh. He is great of soul,
Filled with divine power, but too angel-sweet
For turbulent earth and its gross exigencies;
Strong in design, and magnanimity,
Forbearance, fortitude, and lovingness,
He lacketh still the vehement kingly will—
Will, bred of earth and all that it inherits—
To seize the mountain by its forest hair,
And whirl it into dust. On that soft plain,
The Temple of his Father—the true Spirit—
Straightway might we erect, and not lie hid
In secret places, like forlorn wild beasts
Who dread the hunter's spear. Why doth he wait?
Would he were seized!—condemned to instant death—
Set on a brink, and all his hopes for man

Endangered by his fall—till these extremes
Drew violent lightning from him!—Terrible Shapes
Why haunt ye thus my brain—so oft—so fiercely—
As though 'twere mine to do your bidding—mine
To touch his garment with this dreadful torch?

(He stands in great agitation.)

And yet the intolerable fantasy
Creeps ever down my forehead—round my feet—
Until a deed comes crouching at my hand,
Which beckon'd not, but cannot chase away!

(After a pause.)

Were't good with Jesus' followers I took counsel?
A strong deed prospereth best in company,
If all agree;—securest done alone.

[Exit.]

SCENE II.

*The Chamber of the High Priest in the Temple
of Jerusalem.*

CAIAPHAS, *the High Priest, seated in his chair, discours-
ing with PRIESTS and ELDERS seated on the marble
floor. NICODEMUS reclines thoughtfully on one side.*

CAIAPHAS.

And from this city where we preach, and rule,
Yea, from the highest altar, do they flock;

From Idumæa, and beyond the banks
Of Jordan, flock they, and from Galilee—
From Dan to Beersheba !

FIRST PRIEST.

Of a verity

Their reason hath departed.

CAIAPHAS.

Multitudes

From Tyre and Sidon like great floods pour down
To hear him preach !

FIRST ELDER.

The arch-impostor Jesus

Hath also wrought strange cures.

CAIAPHAS.

Praying and teaching !

And followed for these things, as though pure oil
Honey, and wine, and spices, only came
From rocky Nazareth ! Out of barrenness
Unnatural fires are kindled in their minds.

SECOND ELDER.

Great miracles too !

CAIAPHAS.

Deceptions of the eye !

NICODEMUS.

Truly, his clear face hath a wondrous look,

The quietness whereof is like a lake
Of unknown depth, which lieth in the shade,
Yet hath a gleam as from some hidden light.

CAIAPHAS.

Not of *his* look I spake, but of the eye
Of dazzled multitudes, who thought they saw
Thousands of loaves and fishes !

NICODEMUS.

Also thought
That they did eat thereof.

CAIAPHAS.

As men in fevers,
Or with confounded senses, objects see,
Colours and forms which are not, and can taste
Water as wine ; but these things have an end.

FIRST PRIEST.

And this were good.

SECOND PRIEST.

Would it were come !

NICODEMUS.

How end ?

CAIAPHAS.

How, but with death ! Already have we sent
To lay hands on him.

NICODEMUS.

Have a care in this!
The people love him with exceeding love.

CAIAPHAS (*significantly*).

And *others* are suspected—men of note—
Who follow him in secret.

FIRST PRIEST.

He hath lures
For every sort of bird—baits for all fish.

FIRST ELDER.

Therefore take counsel with your officers
That they act prudently.

Enter a SCRIBE and two PHARISEES.

FIRST PHARISEE.

O, Caiaphas!
Hear a new miracle. The dead hath risen
Again—with wonders greater than before!

CAIAPHAS.

Where?

FIRST PRIEST.

Who hath wrought this?

FIRST PHARISEE.

Lazarus, who was dead,
After four days' entombment—yea, 'tis true—

Hath come to life, and in his grave-clothes prayed
In silence—lifting up his corded hands !

SCRIBE.

Rabbi, it is not lawful.

CAIAPHAS.

Who hath done this ?

FIRST PHARISEE.

Jesus !

(PRIESTS *and* ELDERS *murmur.*)

SECOND PHARISEE.

But the officers and men we sent
To seize, or slay him, may have proved their worth ;
And all his dealings with the other world
Will trouble us no more.

SCRIBE.

The fishermen—
Sinners and publicans—loose women—children—
And the wild multitudes who left the schools
Of Hillel and Schammai, halls, synagogues,
To all the Rabboni turning a deaf ear,
Will then come back each to his proper house ;
And wisdom, learning, law, the priests, and God,
Again find reverence.

Enter a CENTURION and two other OFFICERS.

FIRST PRIEST.

Lo! our officers!

FIRST PHARISEE.

Are these the rough men who went forth in steel,
Spears in their hands, and with a savage joy,
To do our bidding?

SECOND PRIEST.

Come ye thus alone?

NICODEMUS.

Something hath moved them.

CAIAPHAS.

Why have ye not brought him?

CENTURION.

Never man spake like this man.

FIRST OFFICER.

We stood with the rest to listen, and the air grew
silent before his words. Our spears slipped through
our hands upon the ground; our swords were as
shadows upon the wall.

CENTURION.

When he approached us, we stood aside to let him
pass, and no one dared lay hands upon him.

CAIAPHAS.

Are *ye* also deceived ?

SCRIBE.

Behold the ignorance of these fellows, how it maketh their knees tremble.

SECOND PHARISEE (*insidiously*).

Have any of the rulers, or of the pharisees believed in his teaching and his miracles ?

SCRIBE.

Verily, those people who know not the law are cursed. And Jesus is he who leadeth them astray from it.

NICODEMUS.

Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, what he sayeth, and know also what he doeth ?

CAIAPHAS (*rising*).

Art *thou* also of Galilee ? Search, and look, for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet !

[*Exeunt all but* CAIAPHAS, PRIESTS, *and* PHARISEES.

FIRST PRIEST.

Truly, these things are very strange.

SECOND PRIEST.

And besides, damnable. He saith that he is the Son of God, which we know must be false ; and he

also saith that he is the Son of Man, which we may well doubt, for the acts which he doeth are like unto the works of a child of Beelzebub.

FIRST PHARISEE.

He doeth what he listeth, and all the people who come near him believe in him.

SECOND PRIEST.

Yea, even the Pharisee Nicodemus believeth in him.

FIRST PRIEST.

Our officers and soldiers stand aside to let him pass, bowing their heads towards the ground when they should raise their hands to smite him down ; and peradventure some of the scribes and elders shall soon come to hearken unto his preaching.

CAIAPHAS.

All they who hearken to it are accursed. Have a care. I know a Levite, a rich man of Bethoran, who in his youth was a singer in the tabernacle, and afterwards a player upon the ten-stringed oshur ; and now he is a follower of Jesus ! Wherefore may everlasting fires sing and hum around him, and his ears hear the cries of many demons cursing him evermore. Let all who have held offices in the temple or the tabernacle take heed—yea, let them be exceeding watchful that their feet trip not.

SECOND PRIEST.

But the officers and soldiers, O Caiaphas, were men of weak mind.

FIRST PHARISEE.

Unlike unto those who have walked in sacred places and been accustomed to hear the ancient law of Moses and the Prophets.

FIRST PRIEST.

And the Levite of Bethoran was as one who is deaf; wherefore his ears received no wisdom in his youth.

SECOND PRIEST.

Some other means must be devised whereby Jesus shall be stopped in his preaching.

SECOND PHARISEE.

If we let him alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. Yet to kill him seemeth dangerous.

CAIAPHAS.

Ye know nothing at all; nor consider that it is expedient for *us* that one man should *die* for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

SECOND PRIEST.

Thou sayest wisely, O Caiaphas; there is nothing but his death that shall serve us.

FIRST PRIEST.

And peradventure this righteous suggestion shall be accounted a prophecy by the nations who live after us.

CAIAPHAS.

I would that it were so ; but the sword lingereth.

Enter JUDAS (pale and agitated).

FIRST PRIEST.

Thou also art one of those who follow Jesus ; and comest thou here before the High Priest !

SECOND PRIEST.

To kneel and to repent thee of thy backsliding art thou here, else were thy life in much peril.

JUDAS.

I would seek the High Priest, having a troubled mind.

CAIAPHAS.

Speak, for there is mercy in the great temple to such as repent them truly.

JUDAS.

I have bethought me—[*he hesitates*] and in the night have I resolved to do it.

CAIAPHAS.

On what hast thou resolved ?

JUDAS (*still hesitating*).

Concerning that which I had thought.

CAIAPHAS.

Hast thou left the teaching of Jesus?

JUDAS.

I have left him.

FIRST PRIEST.

Hath it come to pass that thou art here to hearken unto the words of the High Priest, and how *he* teacheth?

SECOND PRIEST.

And to note the difference between the twain—yea, between the High Priest in his Chamber, and the homeless Nazarene.

(JUDAS *maketh a sign of assent*.)

THIRD PRIEST.

Verily thou dost well in this.

[JUDAS *turneth aside, resting his head in his hands*.

CAIAPHAS.

It is not the season, Judas, to speak with thee of divine things,—of things derived from our holy law and prophets, seeing thou art as one newly come into the world, with a spirit all unused to righteousness, and with feet that have not trod in sacred places.

SECOND PRIEST.

And worse than this, thy spirit hath hearkened unto the counsels of devils, and thy feet have followed in their track.

CAIAPHAS.

(*To Priest*) Let be. (*To Judas*) Somewhat, however, art thou capable of understanding ; and of earthly things, therefore, must thou first hear from the elders and scribes ; for though the scribes sit in Moses' seat, yet do they look down compassionately upon such as need human knowledge, and the sciences thereof.

FIRST PRIEST.

And they will teach thee with true words.

CAIAPHAS.

The mighty plain, and the rough flatness of the earth we inhabit, this shalt thou learn, and also of the waters which flow all round about it, wherein it floateth ; and of the clouds and heavens which enclose the waters. And your heart shall treasure up these words.

SECOND PRIEST (*in a low voice*).

And your heart shall treasure up these words.

JUDAS (*aside*).

Shall I turn back now that I am so far ?

CAIAPHAS.

Of the heavens themselves,—the great sun that rolleth round about the earth ; and the moon, which is of like size and distance, but of like shape once only in her period, and then dwindleth away even unto an harvest sickle, which is understood by the records ; and of the multitudes of stars, which are marvellous in their ways, and the slowness of their growth—all this shalt thou be taught.

PRIESTS (*in a low tone*).

And your heart shall treasure up these words.

CAIAPHAS.

Of the boundaries of the earth shalt thou hear, and of foreign countries, yea, from Sephar to Ophir, from the rocks of Caucasus, and from the lands beyond Tarshish, which are the edges of the earth.

PRIESTS (*in a low tone*).

And your heart shall treasure up these words.

CAIAPHAS.

Also the arts of trading and of commerce mayst thou be taught ; and warned in good season against much dealing with strange people ; for that which was wisdom in Solomon, who encouraged this, is no longer held good for the people.

PRIESTS (*in loud response*).

And your heart shall treasure up these words.

CAIAPHAS.

Of fishing and of carpentry need I not speak, nor of fruit trees or agriculture, or the tending upon sheep ; neither shall I speak of the rocks and metals underneath the earth—of its sands, and its sparkling darkness many cubits downwards, until arriving on the burning confines of the abyss of hell. But when thou shalt arrive at this knowledge, then shall begin thy instruction in the divine law.

PRIESTS (*loudly*).

Let your heart—

JUDAS (*raising his head*).

I come, O Caiaphas, to betray Jesus unto thee, yea to give him into your hands !

CAIAPHAS (*startled*).

It is good.

FIRST PRIEST (*eagerly*).

Thou speakest wisely, and with a repentant spirit.

THIRD PRIEST.

Thy words, O Caiaphas, have prevailed over him ; over the teaching of the Nazarene hast thou prevailed.

SECOND PRIEST (*to Judas*).

But is thy repentance true ; or dost thou come to act cunningly with us ?

CAIAPHAS.

Can this be so ?

SECOND PRIEST.

Wherefore dost thou come to betray Jesus unto punishment? Hath he offended thee? Hath he taken the bag out of thy hands?

FIRST PRIEST.

Or art thou needy, and seekest thou a reward?

JUDAS (*with a livid smile*).

Thou sayest rightly. I would have thirty pieces of silver for my reward.

CAIAPHAS.

Let them be counted out before him. His spirit is humbled by my words so that he speaketh with a discreet tongue.

[JUDAS *stands aside at one of the windows while the thirty pieces are counted out.*

Scene closes.

SCENE III.

A Dusky Wood. Mount Calvary seen through the Trees. Wind and rain.

Enter JUDAS hastily, and agitated.

And force the lightning from him! Wherefore not? Recoil, impossible—resistance?—none—

Or, if our enemies strove, His head is crown'd,
Invulnerable with glory. How if this
Were brought to pass? The means to do this thing,
With portals wide and glorious sights beyond,
Invite me. But the vacant passage teems!
And now the mist clears off, slowly arise
Pale Forms that gaze around!——
They do not see me—
But only see the deed that's in my mind.
Whence come ye? From the tomb—for so, methinks
Your looks declare! Come ye in warning?—speak!
It is not so. Then wherefore are ye here?
I will pass through ye, Ghosts!——
Soft!—soft!—they fade!—
My brain exchanges influences with the air—
I am uplifted—I have seen strange signs,
Portents, decrees, of what I am to do!

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

The Garden of Gethsemane.

Enter NICODEMUS and CLAUDIA.

CLAUDIA.

This also have I heard.

NICODEMUS.

A divine man ·

'Tis past all doubt. The lame, the blind, the sick,
Touch but his garment's hem, and they are healed !
Even the dead arise.

CLAUDIA.

And Lazarus now,
Who was four days entombed ! The Spirit of God
Must surely dwell with Jesus.

NICODEMUS.

Old and young—
All he receiveth. Women in crowds, and children
Follow him. Little children in his arms
He foldeth up, and blesseth them.

CLAUDIA.

Canst thou bring me
Where I may see him ?

NICODEMUS.

I will watch a time
For this ; and speedily, since there is doubt
How long he tarry with us.

CLAUDIA.

Thou dost speak
Like one who sorroweth. If he depart
Out of Jerusalem, he will return
After his journey ?

NICODEMUS (*tearfully*).

He will *not* depart. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter PETER, JOHN, JAMES, *and* JUDAS.

PETER.

If his word move all hearts, where'er he goeth,
As doth the sun who looketh on the waves,
Call'st thou the light too slow? The divine word
He preacheth, and the spirit of his life,
Are they not quick to reach large multitudes,
Daily?

JUDAS.

But since our days are but a span,
Or we may suffer death by martyrdom,
For us it seemeth slow.

JOHN.

No time is slow,
While love goes with it; wherefore Christ's good time
Let us abide in full faith.

JAMES.

What are we,
That we should question him?

JUDAS (*excitedly*).

But while his power
Could silence their revilings and their taunts,
Set aside all their doctrines and harsh laws,

Wither their soldiers' hands—cast down their walls,
And in the place a mighty Temple erect
To the true Spirit—even to his Father, God—
Behold, instead, he wandereth by the way,
Even as an outcast, and the wicked sit
In the high places, as of old !

PETER.

Nay, Judas ;
Not as of old, with all the future theirs—
For so it seemed—but as things doomed to die,
Since the bright star of Bethlehem arose.

JOHN.

Their nights are numbered. Christ can breathe one
breath—
And all who now sit crowned shall fade in air,
While from the misty silence, to the sweetness
Of psaltery, dulcimer, and angel choir,
His own great Kingdom burneth into view !

JUDAS.

I say this to myself most constantly !
I know this—this I strongly feel !

JOHN.

But when
He shall thus breathe his triumph, no man knoweth—
Or it may be that first we must taste death ;

And therefore should we bear with him the burden
Of the wrong-doers and the blind.

JUDAS.

My spirit
Rebels against this suffering—seeing no end.

JAMES.

When Jesus rules on earth, all pains will end.

JOHN.

Lord, I am thine at all times, and my love
Being equal to my hope, I wait in peace.

PETER.

Shall we not meanwhile suffer cheerfully
All evils that may come ?

JUDAS.

What need of evils?
Have we not known enough of these already ;
And why should Jesus suffer them ? My blood
Leaps up against it.

PETER.

Thou shouldst rather kneel
To Jesus, praying him to grant unto thee
The blessing of his patience.

JOHN.

And the joy,
Serene and glorified, which comes to those
Who, well believing in his future kingdom
On earth, are not unmindful of the grave.

[*Exeunt* PETER, JOHN, and JAMES.]

JUDAS.

They are deaf. Why not his kingdom now on earth ?
The grave, methinks, can better wait than we.

(he pauses.)

The air grows dark !—*(a longer pause.)*

Time trembles in my heart.

I have besought them warily, and I find

My thought must be my act without their aid,

Or counsel.—*(startled.)*

Yonder dusky foliage moves !

There is no wind. I see the gleam of spears !

[JUDAS *makes a sign, and Exit.*]*Enter two* CENTURIONS *with armed Soldiers.*

FIRST CENTURION.

He signalled us that we should follow him.

SECOND CENTURION.

But not too closely.

FIRST CENTURION.

Saw you not that bird
Of evil omen in the gloomy grove ?

A SOLDIER.

Master, this is a bad work.

FIRST CENTURION.

Follow now! [*Exeunt.*]

Enter CAIAPHAS and PONTIUS PILATE.

CAIAPHAS.

Thou, being a just man, and also of great wisdom, wilt surely consider the acts which he hath committed, how worthy they are of punishment at thy hands?

PILATE.

I cannot rightly know what he hath done till I have heard his accusers set it forth, and all those that come to bear witness against him.

CAIAPHAS.

Of these there will be great numbers; but the manifold sins of which he is accused, and the blasphemies he hath spoken, are they not already known to thee?

PILATE.

I have not heard him blaspheme, nor must I judge any of his sins beforehand, nor in private.

CAIAPHAS.

Surely thou wilt condemn this man; or how shall

we be safe from others like unto him, and from them that follow him !

PILATE.

They will all be exposed to the same law, therefore have thou no fear of them.

CAIAPHAS.

In all things, O Pilate, doth he interfere with the priests, so that they feel it sorely, and must cry aloud against it ; and thou, being a pious man, fearing the Gods of thy country, wilt assuredly condemn those who make a mockery and scorn of the priests of any holy faith, and its ceremonies and traditions.

PILATE.

What hath he done against the Jewish priests ?

CAIAPHAS.

He hath taught the people that all men are brothers, and should be equal ; that no man should be master and rabbi ; and that he is greatest who serveth most. What is this but evil speaking and false doctrine, and lying and slandering ? For do we not very well know, O Pilate, that the people are *not* the brothers of those who sit in high places, nor have they any equality except among their fellows who dwell with them. Are there not Kings upon the earth, and High Priests, and Governors of great dignity, and many slaves ?—Why answerest thou not a word ? Besides these false doctrines which he teacheth every-

where openly, he hath wrought pretended miracles, or if not pretended he hath had the aid of demons therein; and he hath moreover gone about healing the sick, and casting out devils. Lepers,—of each of the four kinds,—men and women sick of fevers, and agues, hath he healed; the blind, the lame, and others suffering palsy and tephelim, and diseases of the reins, or suffering grievously in the liver and spleen—not by anointing with oil according to our sacred use, prescribed by ancient traditions for all these diseases, but by prayer!—and the laying on of hands! Of a surety thou wilt visit all these acts with their just reward?

PILATE.

I will see justice done upon him.

[*Sounds of tumult in a distant part of the garden.*]

CAIAPHAS.

What is it?

PILATE.

The sentence must await the forms of law.

CAIAPHAS.

The tumult that we hear,—knowest thou what it means?

PILATE.

I know not.

[*Exit* PILATE.]

CAIAPHAS (*with clenched fingers*).

Yet shalt thou condemn him, unless he work a miracle to save himself. (*Tumult increases.*) The demons that minister unto him are of great strength.

Enter a SCRIBE and two PHARISEES followed by JAMES.

JAMES.

Will ye return to your houses to feast and make merry while this evil is committed? Will no man turn aside to set free the Son of God?

SCRIBE.

Ha-ha! doth the Son of God need aid! and dost thou ask it of us?

FIRST PHARISEE.

What we do is righteousness, but he hath done and spoken abominations.

CAIAPHAS.

If he be the Son of God, let him set himself free.

[*Tumult near at hand.*]

SECOND PHARISEE.

They bear him to the house of Annas. If he be as this man sayeth, let him command the house of Annas

that it fall down upon the heads of all within, while he cometh out whole.

[*Exit* CAIAPHAS.

JAMES.

O, Scribes and Pharisees! boasters and teachers of virtuous things, how full of venom are your hearts! Your words are as the hissing of serpents.

SCRIBE.

He hath taught thee that thou shouldst speak slanderously after his own fashion.

SECOND PHARISEE.

But the tongue of the slanderer shall be silenced. A coal of fire shall be put into his mouth.

(Noise of many voices. A crowd passeth over between the trees at the back, with torches and with gleaming spears.

JAMES *(to Judas)*.

They bear him away!

SCRIBE *(contemptuously)*.

As for thee, return to thy boat which rotteth on the banks of the Galilean sea, and to thy nets which are full of holes.

FIRST PHARISEE *(starting)*.

What's here!

Enter JUDAS, *staggering forward*.

SCRIBE.

This fellow had a stiff neck, and yet a pliant ear, so that while he seemed to scorn my words he followed after a wise direction.

FIRST PHARISEE (*to Judas*).

Thou showest the true spirit of thy master's preaching, having betrayed him to the death of the slave, yea, of the vilest thief.

SECOND PHARISEE.

I have seen the flying-serpent of the wilderness, how he moved upon his belly through the grass; how he darted through the air upon his prey.

SCRIBE.

I stood upon an asp, and he turned and stung the Son of God with a venomous tooth.

[*Exeunt* SCRIBE and PHARISEES.

JAMES (*to Judas*).

Thou standest as a tree that the wind rendeth not, but thou art surely rotted at the core because thou hast done this thing.

Enter MARY (the Mother of JESUS), MARY (the Sister of LAZARUS), MARY MAGDALENE, and JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA.

MARY MAGDALENE (*to Judas*).

Can the shades of night hide thee ; can the thick trees cover thee up, so that our abhorrence reach thee not ?

SISTER OF LAZARUS.

When the moon rises, whither wilt thou flee ; when the stars come out, what cavern shall be deep enough for thee ?

MARY MAGDALENE.

Art thou indeed a man because of thy form ; can a beast of the field put on garments, and sit at supper, and have speech, and salute with a kiss ?

JAMES.

Dost thou see this woman, the Mother of our Lord ; dost thou look upon her ?

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA.

He turneth his head aside. He cannot endure her face—

JAMES.

Though her eyes gaze not on him, and her tongue uttereth no word.

MARY MAGDALENE (*to Judas*).

O that the lightning would run shivering down upon thee!—that the black clouds would open a deluge over thee !

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA.

Let us leave Judas to himself, for surely
There can be naught more miserable on earth.
Even pity hides her head, and is afraid.

[*Exeunt all except* JUDAS.]

JUDAS.

Wherefore be miserable? Why should I feel
Thus heavy and cast down? Reproachful words
Were certain—natural—and they will change
To praises and hosannas, when my deed
Shall justify itself, and the Messiah,
Compelled his power and terrors to reveal,
Shall burn to stubble all their armed hosts,
And sit enthroned. Then shall his followers, clad
In gorgeous raiment—seated in golden chairs,
The necks of enemies beneath their feet—
In ecstasy unspeakable, behold
Above the temple of Jerusalem
His Temple rise with radiance that will make
Aught else unseen; and while his Chosen Priests
Shall with exalted trumpets pierce the sky,
And Scribes and Pharisees, scorched with inward flames,
Sink into heaps of ashes, will the name
Of JUDAS echo from an Angel's voice,
Crying, "Behold, the one ordained of heaven
To urge the great work of redemption on,
Commencing with Christ's kingdom upon earth!"

End of Act I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A Marble Court in the Palace of PONTIUS PILATE.

NICODEMUS *standing at the foot of a colossal statue of JUPITER.*

NICODEMUS.

Thou art of mighty structure, grand of brow,
And capable to smite into the dust
Thine own idolaters ; but all unlike
The Father of mankind—the loving Spirit
Whom Jesus hath declared the one true God,
Above all terrible divinities.
His words are as the seed of many thoughts
That will spring up when he is in the tomb.

Enter CLAUDIA, with disordered robes.

What fearful tidings bring'st thou ?—must he die ?

CLAUDIA.

Is he condemned ?—how goes it in the hall ?
Oh, Nicodemus, I have had a vision !

NICODEMUS.

What did it show thee ?

CLAUDIA.

Holy martyrdoms—

Ruin of empires—down-fall of their Gods.
It was at daybreak. Every moment since
What I then suffered has surrounded me
With equal terrors.

NICODEMUS.

Tell me of this vision.

CLAUDIA.

Methought I sate upon an iron throne,
And I was "Rome"—the queen of all the world.
Our Gods upheld my seat ; in front was Mars
Shining like blood, and Plutus golden-winged
And blind, as usual with the god. Behind
Were other figures. These I could not see,
And yet I felt their bodies beat and stir
With fearful life, beneath my heaving seat.
The throne was on a basement, broad and high,
Of silver molten, like a rolling sea
When the sun glares athwart the streaming wind.
Beneath me, in a vast unbroken crowd,
The generations of the earth were kneeling ;
And like great corn-fields bowing down their heads,
In wavy masses far away they spread,
Faint in the distance, mingling with the sky.

NICODEMUS.

This is some revelation.

CLAUDIA.

Presently

A long-robed Figure, with a veiled head,
Before me passed ; a shepherd's crook he bore
In his right hand, and at his side was slung
An earthen water-vessel. 'Neath his veil
I saw he wore a garland round his head.
In his left hand a book lay open wide,
Wherefrom he read aloud :—" This is the book
Which the Erythræan Sibyl sold to Tarquin.
And here 'tis written, ' Woe to thee, O Rome,
Thou art a murderess !—also woe to thee,
Murderous Jerusalem !'" The augur's book
Closed with a clap of thunder. He was gone.

NICODEMUS.

Because they murder Jesus ! Saw'st thou more ?

CLAUDIA.

The great field of the people now displayed
Ridges of shade and light, in contest fierce ;
Then in the midst rose Jupiter, as here
Thou see'st our nation's God ; but more stupendous
An hundred fold ; and o'er the crowds he moved,
Taking no note of those he crushed. While yet
I gazed and trembled, transformations strange
Were wrought, and from his mouth a dreadful sword

Sting-like was darted forth, and from his hands
Were scattered deadly plagues.

NICODEMUS.

What vision's this !

CLAUDIA.

Now thunder came, which was his voice, and spake
Words that I understood not, but my throne
Shook from behind, and then I knew the forms
Supporting it were Furies, Fates, and Hours !
Meanwhile the myriads kneeling all below
Sent up a cry—for lightnings, that had played
Round the God's head, had fallen, and the flames
Were eating wide gaps through the living fields.

NICODEMUS.

Daughter, what manner of interpretation
Would'st thou ——

CLAUDIA.

Hear more. The burning multitudes
Held on their cry, until it brought an earthquake—
Became articulate—and it was "Christ !"
Down through the earthquake's jaws sank Jupiter,
And with him Hebrew Wrath, Plague, Sword and Fire!
"Christ !" cried the sufferers—and lo ! Christ came,
Moving along the field—and all was still !
Where lightnings played was now a smiling sky.

NICODEMUS.

And Christ ?

CLAUDIA.

Was Jesus—he whom they prepare
E'en now to martyr—Jesus the Nazarene !

NICODEMUS.

Knoweth thy lord of this portentous vision ?

CLAUDIA.

No ; he was risen ere day-break. I will send
A messenger into the Judgment Hall,
To warn him that he touch not this just man.

NICODEMUS.

I prythee haste !

[*Exeunt.*

Enter JUDAS, who gazes after them. He then seats himself on a pediment opposite the statue.

JUDAS.

Prophetic vision !—send
To Pilate, seated in the Judgment Hall,
To warn him ! Aye, I knew it would be so.
They spake in terror. In a little while
Pilate will come down from his judgment throne,
And kneel at Jesus' feet to sue forgiveness.

Enter TWO LAWYERS.

FIRST LAWYER.

I witnessed the whole, for I was curious therein,

having heard marvellous things of Jesus, and of his public speaking.

SECOND LAWYER.

Tell me what thou knowest. I am but newly come to Jerusalem, in company with the Counsellor of Arimathea, who beareth a great love towards Jesus.

FIRST LAWYER.

When that the centurions and their spearmen had girded up their loins, and called upon their Gods for help, so that they were able to lay hands upon Jesus, they took him straightway to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, and second in authority to him in the temple. But when Annas saw whom they had brought, he was afraid, and knew not what to do. And Jesus bade him take courage, that he should do what the law directed. But Annas turned away, telling them to take Jesus to Caiaphas, for it was fit that he should go before the High Priest. So they took Jesus before Caiaphas.

SECOND LAWYER.

What said the High Priest unto him ?

FIRST LAWYER.

Caiaphas adjured him by the living God that he should say if he were the Christ, the chosen of the Lord. And Jesus answered that he was the Christ, and that hereafter he should be seen sitting at the

right hand of God ! Then Caiaphas rent his robes ; and the splendour of his vestments spared he not at all—crying aloud, “He hath spoken blasphemy—what need of further witnesses—ye have heard him—what should be his sentence ?” Then the priests, and scribes, and elders of the Sanhedrim, all answered with loud voices, “He is guilty of death !”

(JUDAS *folds his arms.*)

SECOND LAWYER.

But how came he hither to be judged in yonder hall where Pilate now sits ?

FIRST LAWYER.

After several of the servants, and others that were there, had smitten Jesus and scoffed at him, and spat upon him, the priests and scribes sent him to remain amidst the soldiers who sat round the fire ; and they mocked him through the night, and peradventure they wrought him bodily pain and injury for their sport.

JUDAS (*through his teeth*).

The fiery ending of their sport will be the beginning of my gladness.

FIRST LAWYER.

What saith he ?

SECOND LAWYER.

Somewhat in hatred of the soldiers. Knowest thou aught else ?

FIRST LAWYER.

This morning Caiaphas sent Jesus unto Pilate to be condemned to some manner of death. But Pilate said, "Nay—take him, and judge him yourselves by your law." They answered and said, "We cannot put any one to death, as thou knowest. He must die by the Roman law." Then Pilate said to Jesus, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" And Jesus answered and said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews."

JUDAS (*aside*).

Said he that his servants would fight if his kingdom were of this world? What need that his servants should rise up to fight when thousands of the Host of the Lord will descend from heaven at his bidding! Yea—this world also is his kingdom.

SECOND LAWYER.

Therefore Pilate would not condemn him?

FIRST LAWYER.

Thou sayest well; and he sent him to Herod that the King might judge him. Now Herod had a great wish to see Jesus, who had wrought so many marvels; and he looked that some miracles or wonders would be wrought in his presence. But Jesus held his peace, and he lifted not his hand to do any

wonder. So Herod and his men of war scoffed at Jesus, and sent him back to Pilate.

JUDAS (*half aside*).

The miracles you ask will come anon, but not in such sort as ye desire.

(*Shouts outside the walls—"Away with him!" "Away with him!"*)

Enter an ELDER.

SECOND LAWYER.

Why do the people shout?

ELDER.

Pilate hath again been forth to them, saying that he findeth no fault with Jesus.

JUDAS (*aloud*).

He beareth in mind the warning of his wife, and lo, he is wisely terrified with that which God revealed to her in a wondrous vision!

SECOND LAWYER.

All this is very marvellous.

FIRST LAWYER.

But it is also natural.

JUDAS.

More—more.

ELDER (*to Judas*).

Hold thy peace, lest evil befall thee for thy speech.

Enter THREE PRIESTS.

FIRST PRIEST.

Let them shut the windows of the Judgment Hall;
we shall hear nothing worth.

ELDER.

Stood ye near enough outside the windows to hear
all that was said, and yet to avoid being defiled?

SECOND PRIEST.

Yes ; but Jesus spake not.

FIRST LAWYER.

I marvel that he uttered not his nicest oratory with
a subtle tongue.

SECOND PRIEST.

He held his peace, or only spake with quietly insolent and contumacious fewness of words.

JUDAS.

Presently he shall speak that which ye expected
not to hear!

(Aside, and stamping on the ground).

Now ! now !

FIRST LAWYER.

Let us go to the outside beneath the open windows.

[Exeunt TWO LAWYERS.

SECOND PRIEST.

Wherefore should Pilate hesitate to condemn him to death, and wherefore came he out twice unto us with vain words?

JUDAS.

Other words are coming that shall dry up your ears, as the things that shall follow will sting through your sight.

FIRST PRIEST.

Who is this fellow that sitteth on one side, and threateneth with a forked tongue, like a viper in the shade?

THIRD PRIEST.

I saw a scourge in the hands of a soldier in the hall, and he was exercising his arm in the air.

(Shouts outside.)

ELDER.

Behold, Pilate hath a third time gone forth to the people!

JUDAS.

Pilate is sorely troubled. The hour!—the hour!

(Shouts and curses outside.

Cries of "Crucify him! Crucify him!")

(*The THREE PRIESTS and the ELDER join in the shout : "Crucify him ! Crucify him !"*)

JUDAS.

Ha ! ha ! ye vultures, ye ravens—bloody wolves that have no sense of coming things !

THIRD PRIEST.

Look to thyself, dog ! for thy rabid froth is well known.

JUDAS.

(*Rising up and lifting his arms in the air.*)

In a little while we shall all be known—yea, by the purification of fire, and the changes of thrones and high seats ! Our Lord, Christ, hath two kingdoms, one in heaven, and one upon earth,—though of this last he maketh no boast. But he holdeth it in the hollow of his hand ; and now he will grasp it fast, and deal with it as he listeth.

(*Sounds of measured blows, proceeding from within the Hall of Judgment.*)

THIRD PRIEST.

Thou fool ! hearest thou the blows of the scourge in the Hall, and sayest thou that Jesus holdeth the earth in his hand ?

JUDAS (*staggering hither and thither*).

The scourge !——

FIRST PRIEST.

Let him take the rods out of the hand that smiteth him; that were power enough for his present need.

(Measured sounds from the Hall continuing.

JUDAS, trembling all over, slowly re-seats himself.)

Enter SCRIBE and TWO PHARISEES.

SCRIBE AND PHARISEE.

Hail, Masters, it is accomplished!

THIRD PRIEST.

He is condemned unto death?

SCRIBE AND PHARISEE.

To be crucified!

SCRIBE.

Such is his sentence.

FIRST PHARISEE.

Pilate came forth and washed his hands before us, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person—see ye to it."

THIRD PRIEST.

Called he this criminal a just person!

FIRST PRIEST.

And heard we not all the people cry with a loud voice, "His blood be on us, and on our children!"

(Measured sounds from the Hall, continued.)

SCRIBE.

And forthwith began the scourging that ye hear. We beheld the blood following the blows, and by this time the chastisement that precedeth his death hath driven the red stream down to his feet, and beneath the feet of those who stand around.

JUDAS *(rising and hurrying into the midst)*.

Seemed it indeed that there was *real* blood—the blood of Jesus that flowed beneath their feet?

(All shout in derision.)

FIRST PRIEST.

Think'st thou it was water or wine that issued from his loins?

JUDAS *(stamping upon the pavement)*.

It was *not* blood! no blood have ye seen—neither shall Christ be crucified! What is your sentence but a wind, and your condemnation but an echo of the voice of waters! Verily, nothing of all this shall come to pass, but something else, more terrible than the tongue of man can speak, shall burst upon you! The Great Temple of Jesus, who is Christ and King, shall rise before you, as though the sun rose up

glaring through the earth, even as it is wont to rise from the sea !

(All shout in derision.)

SCRIBE *(to the PRIESTS and PHARISEES)*.

The people have cried aloud that he should be crucified, and this is his sentence ; but let us take counsel awhile among ourselves, whether some other death be not better suited.

SECOND PHARISEE.

What better can we devise ?

JUDAS *(abstractedly)*.

Dóminion ! dominion !—where is it ?

SCRIBE.

Of strangling and stoning care I not to speak, neither of drowning with a weight about the neck ; but of the sawing asunder let us take note, even as was a custom in the old time before us.

FIRST PRIEST.

Not so ; because the Prophet Isaiah died by that death, and because the idolater Manasseh ordered it.

SECOND PHARISEE.

Were it good that he were given to wild beasts ?

JUDAS *(with anguish)*.

He is—he is !

SECOND PRIEST.

Not so ; because the Prophet Daniel was cast into the den of lions.

SCRIBE.

But coming out whole and untouched, while Jesus would be rent in pieces, this might be regarded as a fitting expiation.

SECOND PHARISEE.

Choose we rather the braying in the mortar, which is a goodly punishment.

THIRD PRIEST.

I have bethought me in the night that we should burn him with slow fire, first sealing up his eyes, while his ears were filled with strange and frightful sounds as the heat of the furnace began to rise. This were lawful.

(Tumult outside.)

SCRIBE *(pointing a finger).*

Behold, what manner of King is he who slowly passeth along from the Hall ! His crown is a mockery of bloody thorns. Seest thou, Judas, yonder King with his crown ?

(JUDAS rushes out, rending his garments and his beard.)

FIRST PRIEST.

Let Jesus be crucified ; there is no other death so vile as this.

ALL.

Crucify him ! Crucify him !

[*Exeunt Omnes.*

(A crowd of Roman Military and Civil Officers, in merry conversation, pass across, and Exeunt.

Enter PONTIUS PILATE *and* CLAUDIA.

CLAUDIA.

Wherefore I pray my lord to use his power,
Even to the utmost, listening to the voice
Of heaven's high oracles, as in my vision
Revealed ; the voice of Justice, which thou know'st
Crieth aloud for him—ah, louder far
Than all the curses of the yelling Jews ;
The voice of natural feeling in your heart,
Which saith “ Be merciful ;” and last of all
The voice of her who once within your eyes
Was passing fair—your humble, loving wife.

PILATE.

Claudia !

CLAUDIA.

I do intreat—my lord——

PILATE.

Be patient.

CLAUDIA.

I would be so—I ever after will—
But patience now is certain death to him.

PILATE.

He teacheth patience.

CLAUDIA.

But not hardness of heart.
Thou art not half so hard as thou appear'st,
And men believe ; the judgment throne is hard,
Therefore thy bearing doth assort with it
Of need,—an evil of authority,
Not to be gainsayed nor avoided—

PILATE.

Wife,
Be calm—and silent. He hath sought his death.

CLAUDIA.

Not so—not sought it—soldiers——

PILATE.

Claudia !

It is enough. Three times did I go forth
Unto the furious Jews, opening all chances
For his release—whether by change of mind
In the multitude—by fear, love, fickleness—
Such as the memory of his miracles,
His marvellous cures, preaching, and fortitude,—
And something in his presence that betokened

One of a spirit beyond martyrdom—
Might well have bred. Also I gave him time
That he should well bethink himself, and use
His wondrous gift of speech. But he was mute—
Or when not mute, he exercised no power
Of inspiration—wrought no miracle—
Nor prophesied. For these things men had looked,
Excitedly,—the which I waited for,
To turn to his account.

Enter JUDAS behind.

CLAUDIA.

And not one word
Spake he—

PILATE.

Nor gave one look—nor made one sign
To save himself—nor manifested wish
That I should save him. Wherefore I conclude
It was his purpose and his will to die,
Seeing 'twas best since he could do no more.

CLAUDIA.

Woe to thee, Rome! thou art a murderess!
Woe to Jerusalem—a murderess also!
Thus spake the augur in my dream.

PILATE.

His blood
Is not on me—I have washed my hands; and did so

Before the people, as a last resource
To make them pause. The bearded Hebrews howled,
'His blood be upon us—and on our children.'
So *be* it! I did all I could, with safety,—
And somewhat more than prudent, in my place,
Not safe from all corruption, nor men's tongues.
I marvel not the Jews are full of wrath,
For surely *their* God differeth much from his;
And why should they believe his fabulous birth?
Therefore be thoughtful. Speak of this no more.

[*Exeunt* PILATE and CLAUDIA.

(JUDAS *slowly clasps and raises his hands.*)

JUDAS.

Now Darkness, build a Temple o'er my soul,
And let a torrent roll around the base
To drown all mercy! Let the high priest be Death,
And on the altar place the accursed form
Of Judas, ever dying, yet alive
To constant sacrifice—while tongues of fire
Follow the knife's course, shrieking out his sin
Through every running vein! Come, monstrous Hell,
And be a friend to Judas!—from earth's eye,
Swallow him up—and from the eye of heaven.

(*Sinks down with his face in the dust.*)

(*Scene closes.*)

SCENE II.

Interior of the Temple of Jerusalem. Outer Courts and Eastern Gate visible, with the Mount of Olives in the distance.

Enter CAIAPHAS, ANNAS, and an ELDER.

ELDER.

I was among the crowd, and near unto the officers and soldiers, noting all things even as ye had desired me, but taking no active part therein. And I say again, thus did the soldiers.

ANNAS.

Stepped they backward many paces?

ELDER.

They retired from before Jesus, and fell down upon the earth, as if they had suddenly beheld the glory of a great light.

CAIAPHAS.

Thou speakest as if he had wrought upon their spirits; but have we not proof that his followers were armed, and did battle for him? Verily my servant Malchus had been cleft in twain, but that the sword of his assailant glanced aside in his fury.

ELDER.

He that smote him, was reproved by Jesus.

ANNAS.

Then came the soldiers once more to seize him, and sayest thou he offered no resistance ?

ELDER.

They were troubled at the sight of him ; but he gave himself up to be bound. Had he raised his hand, or prophesied, so would they all again have fallen to the earth. But he gave himself peacefully into their charge.

CAIAPHAS.

How knowest thou what more the soldiers had done if he had resisted them ? Shall men of good estate be permitted to speak with a foolish tongue ? It hath been told me that certain Pharisees sent to Jesus, ere this, to warn him that he should escape ! Shall the disease spread so deep and climb so high, and the heavens put on no blackness ? Howbeit he is now secured, and condemned to death, and an end hath come to all his blasphemies, and to the evil he hath sent abroad into men's spirits.

ANNAS.

In good season hath it all ended.

CAIAPHAS.

Therefore have we devised the extremity of all disgrace to attend upon the manner of his death ; by

crucifixion, and by the companionship of thieves, so that no disciples shall go forth in future without fear of stoning, and no man utter the name of Jesus without suffering scorn.

ANNAS.

Who is he that cometh yonder up the steps of the court, profaning the Temple ?

ELDER.

Peradventure one of the artificers or labourers, who work in the outer buildings.

ANNAS.

A bibber of wine !—for, see how he rusheth, and reeleth forward ! His presence here is death by the law.

ELDER.

Hath he fallen upon the lowermost steps, that ye see him not again ?

ANNAS.

His head riseth above the upper pavement !

CAIAPHAS.

Wherefore cometh he ? Hath he also a sword ?

ANNAS.

He hath not put off his shoes !

ELDER.

Behold, his garments are rent !—he hath a ragged tawny beard—his eyes are red with blood—and his mouth is wide open, that uttereth no sound !

Enter JUDAS (rushing forward wildly).

CAIAPHAS.

Ha ! whom seekest thou ? Darest thou affront the High Priest !

ANNAS.

Knowest thou the man ?

CAIAPHAS.

I know him. This is he who betrayed Jesus to justice for thirty pieces of silver.

ELDER.

Speak, profaner of the Temple !

JUDAS.

I have sinned !—I have betrayed innocent blood !

CAIAPHAS.

What is that to us ? See thou to that !

(JUDAS staggers on one side towards the altar).

ELDER.

His eyes glare—the foam gusheth through his teeth !

CAIAPHAS.

Behold what he doeth ! Behold, he graspeth the golden horns of the altar !

ELDER.

He hath a horror that riseth up like a fire-drake round his head !—Is it rage or madness bursting out between his lips !

ANNAS (*in terror*).

Give him more pieces—give him pieces of gold, and let him go his ways !

CAIAPHAS (*stepping back alarmed*).

He thrusteth one hand into his breast to tear out his heart ! See that he pollute not the Temple !—have a care of God's holy place, and of God's anointed ministers !

ANNAS.

He hath a demon !

[JUDAS dashes a handful of silver pieces upon the pavement, and rushes away out of sight.]

(*Scene closes.*)

SCENE III.

*The field of Aceldama, flanked by a wood. Mount
Calvary in the distance. Time, evening.*

*Enter JOHN, JAMES, and PETER with his
face hidden in his hands.*

JOHN.

Take comfort ; for our Lord hath often said
The truth that rests at bottom of the heart,
By that shall ye be judged ; let it come forth
In act, and then 'tis virtue.

PETER.

How did truth
Come forth in me ?

JOHN.

'Twas but an accident
Of half thy nature ; but when thou didst draw
Thy sword, then spake thy heart ;—and deeper spake
When at *his* bidding thou didst sheathe the blade.
Come on with us.

JAMES.

Come, see our Master die,
That our last lesson from him—how to bear
The loss of earthly hopes for the truth's sake—
We may receive.

PETER.

And also how to give
Our life in martyrdom for his dear name.

JOHN.

Come, Peter!—brother, come!

PETER.

I am unworthy.

[*Exit* PETER.]

JOHN.

Our Lord is on his way. Hear you the noise
Of the distant multitude?

JAMES.

Where shall we stand

JOHN.

Beside his lofty Cross, until it tremble
With his last anguish—and his victory.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter a crowd of Jewish people, men, women and children; with a number of Roman soldiers mingling among them.

(Many Jewish voices cry aloud—)

“Crucify him! crucify him!
His blood be on us, and on our children!”

[*Exeunt.*]

*Enter JUDAS, with a handful of earth
clutched in his fingers.*

JUDAS.

If *he*, being Son of God, consent to die,
Seeming to prove the truth of all their taunts ;—
If, with the power he hath to smite this city—
The temple, tabernacle, all the hosts
And men of valour—pharisees, scribes, priests—
He will not speak—he will not lift his hand ;—
If truly, God in him can with a thought
Bring earthquake underneath Jerusalem,
To swallow all, save his own chosen flock,
Yet he consent meekly to be nailed down
Upon a felon's Cross, which they have sworn
To plant on yonder mount between two thieves,
There, 'midst revilings, taunts, and jeers, to die—
The drooping head, the languishing swell'd limbs—
He—our Lord Jesus—whom I have betrayed,
Dying this death—O God, the Eternal Eye !
Scorch up this reasoning, blight each mad'ning sense,
Confuse my life with any creeping thing,
So that I know it not—change to some stone
Wherefrom no iron-heel can strike one spark—
Make me a darkness !—let me melt to rain,
And steal beneath the earth !—I hear them coming !

(JUDAS drops on his knees.)

Seest thou, Great Father, him thou fashionedst
With strength and order, what he hath become ?
A wild and hideous perplexity,
That hideth from himself ! Oh pass him by,

E'en as this clot of earth, which he scraped up
To look for death, and leave this upper hell—
And in especial save him from this night—
See him not—know him not—nor ask for him.

(Rising in terror.)

Where is the man called Judas?—where is he?
Thunder is in my brain—the clouds are silent.
Nowhere, Lord!—nowhere—Judas is no more!

(Voices of a distant crowd.)

Enter NICODEMUS *and* JOSEPH of ARIMATHEA.

NICODEMUS.

This is the man, Judas Iscariot!
See where he lurketh underneath the trees!

JOSEPH.

Let not our eyes behold him, lest wild fancies
Shape monstrous things that breed unholy thoughts,
And loss of faith in nature. Hast thou seen
The place I have selected for the tomb
Of Jesus?

NICODEMUS.

I have seen it.

JUDAS.

No! no! no!

He is not dead—he is the Son of God,
And cannot die!—why speak ye of the tomb!
Unless it be for Judas?

JOSEPH.

Thither we

Will bear his sacred body, and our hearts
Shall dwell with him in that cold sepulchre
Where glory seeketh rest within the shade.

NICODEMUS.

Aloes, and myrrh, and spices will I bring,
And swathes of finest linen.

JOSEPH.

We must sue
To Pilate first, that he should render us
The body.

(JUDAS *smites his forehead with his earthly hand.*)

NICODEMUS.

He will grant this, if all's done
With secrecy.

JOSEPH.

Lord Jesus, we attend thee !

[*Exeunt* JOSEPH and NICODEMUS.]

JUDAS.

The body, said they !—how the field whirls round !
A pharisee and a lawyer bury Christ !
Bury him !—bury the Son of God !——
And now——
The women come ! It is the Mother of Christ
That walketh foremost with a steadfast eye,
Red with her sleepless anguish, but no tear.

Her thoughts are heavenward—where shall I crouch
down?—

I still must stare upon her!

*Enter MARY (the Mother of CHRIST) and her SISTER;
MARY MAGDALENE, and MARY the wife of Cleophas.*

MARY MAGDALENE.

Twice he sank
Beneath the weight—I saw him through the crowd,
His pale, long-suffering face look'd up to God,
And smiled.

WIFE OF CLEOPHAS.

Then from his shoulders, newly scourged,
Took they the cross, seeing he could not walk,
For very faintness under blows and wounds.

MARY MAGDALENE (*seeing JUDAS*).

Not pitying, but cursing—shall I speak
Of curses, and not use them?

(*She points towards Judas.*)

MARY'S SISTER.

'Tis the shadow
Of a tree-trunk.

MARY MAGDALENE.

Behind it croucheth close
A wild beast, gnashing in his impotence,
Or in remorse as vain. There is no hope
That Judas shall find pardon on the earth,

Nor in the grave. Earth with its myriad snakes
Hisseth against him, and the grave will utter
A shriek at his approach ! Nothing remains
For him but constant horror, and himself.

MOTHER.

Do not disturb the greatness of the hour.

MARY'S SISTER.

Jesus approacheth. Let us follow him,
And take our station upon Calvary.

[*Exeunt all but JUDAS.*]

JUDAS.

One saith, behold a monster ! another saith,
Lo ! a wild beast !

(Sounds of an approaching crowd.

*JUDAS clasps his arms round a tree,
and tears the bark with his teeth.)*

Enter LAZARUS, solemnly.

LAZARUS.

Cold with the shadows of the grave upon me,
And dusky in my body and my mind,
I yet do walk abroad with higher sense
Of life ;—and round about me wonders float—
Gleamings and whispers—and before my path
God's finger sometimes writeth in the sand.

JUDAS (*in an audible whisper*).

Thou art one risen from the dead !—Oh tell me,
If the dead recollect their deeds on earth ?

LAZARUS.

Somebody speaketh

JUDAS.

Come no nearer to him.—

Thou saidst God's finger wrote upon the sand :
What did it write ?—Judas Iscariot ?

LAZARUS.

Doth thy crime fill thy mind to such a pass,
Thou think'st God writeth of it ?

JUDAS.

Verily.

LAZARUS.

Then I will pray for thee.

JUDAS.

Oh terrible !

(JUDAS *sinks behind the tree, as* LAZARUS
raises his hands.)

LAZARUS.

Jehovah !—Spirit of Wrath ! thou God of Moses !
Shower not thy flaming sulphur on his head !

Let him seek words—seek prayers to the Great Father
Of the Divine one who is on his way
To die upon a cross between two thieves—
Let Lazarus, who seems awful to himself,
Because he hath approached Thy Shadow nearer
Than other men—and hath thereby a sense
Of somewhat more profoundly spiritual
Thrilling on all sides—offer up a prayer,
Asking for mercy, but a speedy death,
In Christ's pure name, which halloweth all words ;—

(Tumult near at hand.)

JUDAS.

Quick ! quick ! I hear them.

*(A multitude pass along the back of the field
with a large Cross borne in the midst of
them. They ascend Calvary in the evening
twilight.)*

LAZARUS.

Pardon me, O Christ,
That I, bewildered with my double life—
My hope and joy, each deep as is the grave,
And melancholy by profundity—
Have strayed from thy dear side at this great hour
Of agony and triumph ! Lo, I follow.

[Exit LAZARUS.]

JUDAS.

The prayer ! the prayer for *me*, O Lazarus !
The prayer's unfinished, and he's gone ! Will no one
Haste after him—or fall at Jesus' feet
And tell the history of my matchless sin,
And that I never thought of death to him—
Never believed in it—I dreamed of nothing
But power's surpassing glory. Give me strength
Ye fibrous trees—thou teeming earth—thou sky,
With all thy mighty shades, that I may leave
This hideousness, and follow him. On ! on !
My limbs are cramped—my mouth is full of dust,
Mine eyes spin webs of fire—Oh mercy, Christ !
Mercy ! for thou canst hear me from afar—
Hear me scream “Mercy !”

*(Distant sounds of the heavy blows
of a hammer on Calvary.)*

Golgotha replies !
And all the echoes round Mount Calvary !
Can it be ? Yes !—they nail him through the hands !
I see the gushing blood—it stains the vests
Of those who murder him ! He prayeth for them—
Forgiveth them !—me, too, Lord ! I have ever
Loved thee—but I grew mad—and now I wake !
How pale he lies !—how patient ! Cover me
Ye bloody trees !—ye flapping shadows snatch me
Away into your caverns ! Lazarus !
Come back !—will no one hear me !

(Heavy blows of a hammer echo from Calvary.)

Through his feet
The great nail slowly crushes!—pierces down
Into the wood! Oh, Pilate, once again—
'Tis not too late—come forth unto the people—
Command all this to cease—this mockery
Tow'rds one who cannot die—and yet he will!
The Son of God will die! Scribes, pharisees!
Thou damned Caiaphas, and all the priests
Thrice curséd of our God, come here; come here!
And see your blind, mad work! Your work and mine!
I meant it not—I never dreamed of this—
Witness ye glaring creatures that whirl round me!
Witness my soul—witness before my God,
For even I name God—I must—I must—
And He will be the wise Judge! See your work,
Ye priests and rulers. Oh, I know my share!

(JUDAS staggers to and fro.)

Hark! hark!—they raise the Cross!
They bear it to its bed—they drop its foot
Heavily down!—The jar shakes all his frame
With tortures—sickening! Where is death for me?
Come wrestler—come: take Judas in thine arms,
And win, dark Idiot—so shall Judas gain
A hiding place!

(JUDAS tears out some long trailing thorns and
green tendrils, and twisting them about his
throat, rushes to a tree, which he ascends,
and fastens the other end of the tendril to a

*strong bough. Darkness spreads over the face
of the earth.)*

JUDAS (*from the midst of the tree*).

Mother of all the graves,
Open them all for Judas!—now—this instant!
Bid him, O Mother of Corruption, seek
The lowest and the darkest! Christ have mercy,
And let him find it! Plunge for ever down!

(JUDAS *springs downwards — the tree falls
with a crash, and covers his crushed body
with its black foliage.*

*The earth trembles. Graves open—and pale
Forms rise, and gaze around!)*



